

Adbusters

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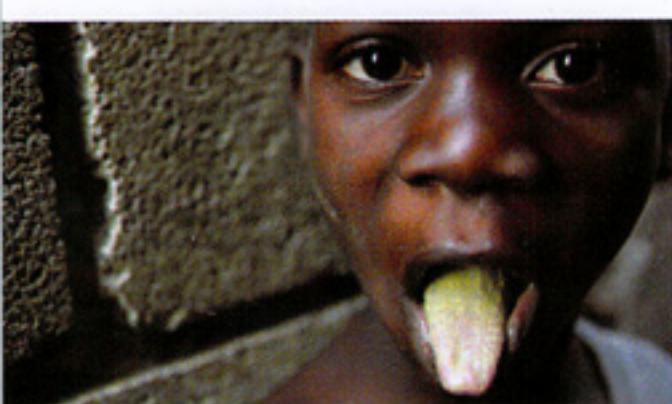
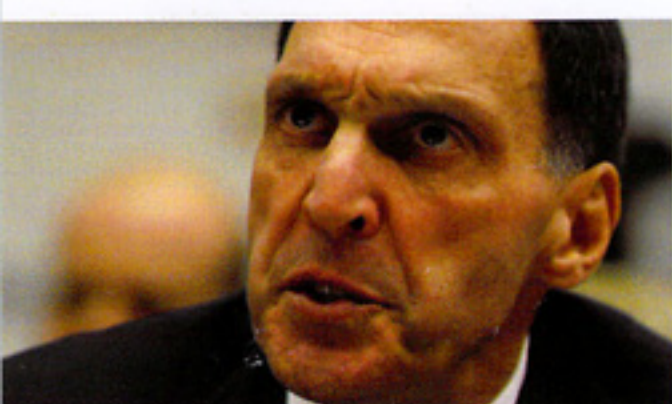
MEDIA & CULTURE ■ THE ENVIRONMENT ■ BUSINESS
GEOPOLITICS ■ ART & LIFE ■ MEME WARFARE

MAN OF THE YEAR
HERMAN DALY



The Big Ideas of 2009

SPECIAL PARADIGM SHIFTER ISSUE



www.adbusters.org





BELL SOTO

memewarrior

meme war



World War IV is a guerrilla information war, a clash of ideologies, business models, economic paradigms, religious beliefs and alternative visions of the future, happening inside your head right now.

Becoming a combatant in this meme war is the only way to be truly alive in the 21st century.

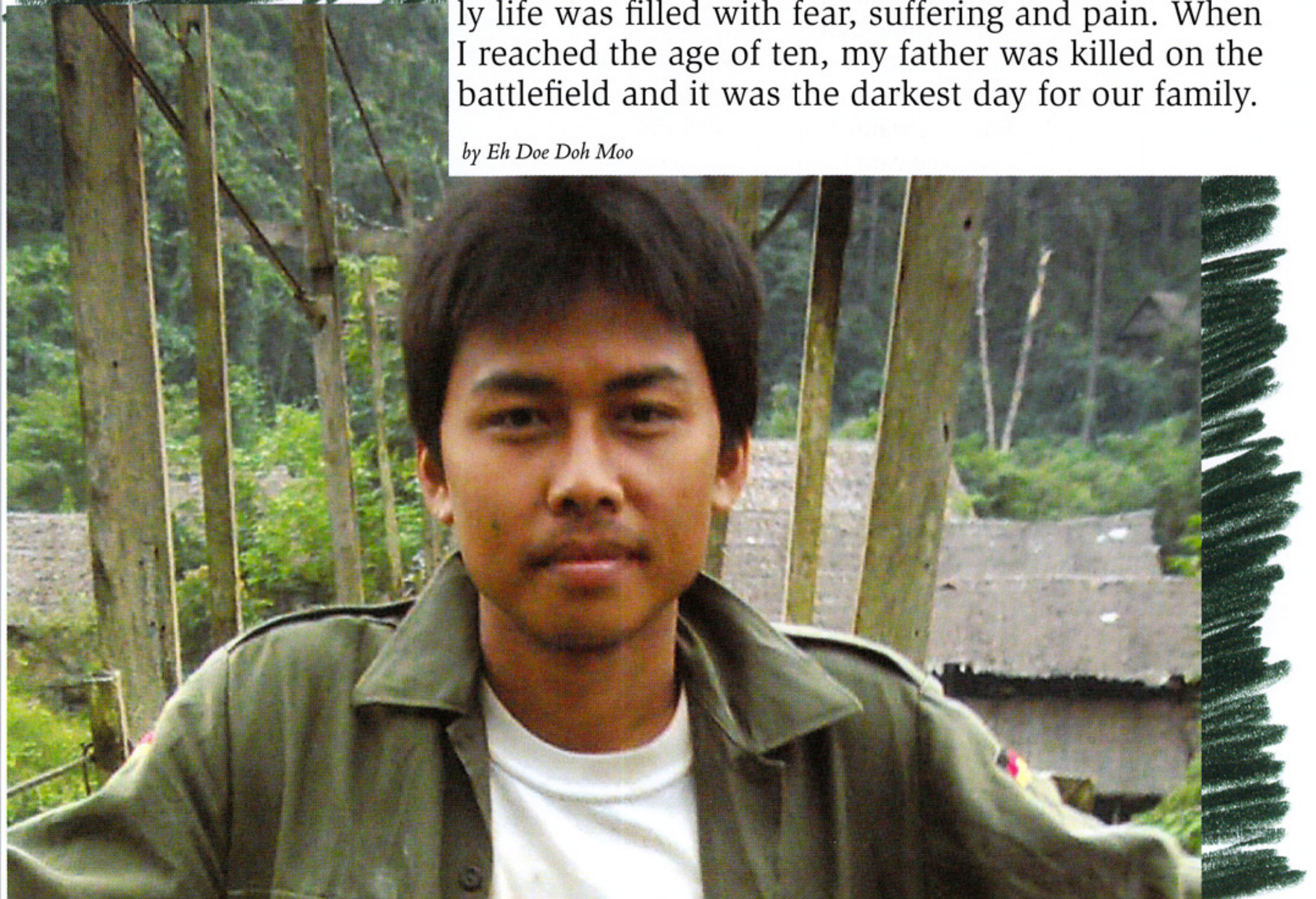


See: the wrinkled face of an exhausted economic standard. It's this guy, Richard S. Fuld Jr., the villain in a meme war that's only revving up. He's the millionaire cutout, an amalgam of every man that's allowed a free market to run amok, leaving a befuddled society to clean up.

I was born in a very terrible situation in a civil war zone in Burma. My father was a revolutionary soldier of the Karen National Union (rebel) and fought against the Burmese military regime.

My mom always took care of our family and our daily life was filled with fear, suffering and pain. When I reached the age of ten, my father was killed on the battlefield and it was the darkest day for our family.

by Eh Doe Doh Moo



My mom didn't want her children to join the revolutionary group. Losing her beloved husband in fighting was a bitter experience and very painful, so she didn't want to lose her son too. In those days, most of the Karen people thought that to be a revolutionary you have to be a soldier, you have to hold arms and fight for freedom and self-determination. They thought there were no ways to get liberation without armed struggle.

At that time, I also thought that armed struggle was the only way to get freedom. I wanted revenge against the Burmese soldiers. My father was killed, my uncle was killed, my cousin was killed, my friends were killed and my people were killed, tortured, abused, and raped by the civil war. I have learned from the elders that "without sacrificing your blood, you won't be freed from slavery." Fighting means for me protecting my family, my village, my territory and my people. When I was fourteen years old, I accompanied my uncle to the battlefield to see war, and saw dead bodies, injuries, pain and suffering. The experience motivated me to become a freedom fighter.

When I was old enough, I joined the Karen revolutionary group, but my mom didn't want me to join. She just wanted me to finish my high school in the refugee camp. My mom gave up since she couldn't stop me and let me join. She just prayed for me to be saved from all forms of danger. I served as a freedom fighter for two years in the jungle, living in poor conditions without good food or shelter, and working hard. Some nights I had bad dreams. But these difficulties didn't get me down. After our territory was occupied by the Burmese army, I came back to the refugee camp and finished my high school.



Changing But Still A Revolutionary Man

When I finished grade ten in Tham Hin refugee camp, I met with my old friend who worked in Bangkok and he asked me to come with him to Bangkok for a two-month training course. I was very happy to get out of the camp, and I thought it would be a great opportunity for me even though I had no idea what kind of training it would be.

It was community organizing training. We learned thinking skills, structural analysis and community organizing skills. This training course gave me many new ideas. I have learned that armed struggle is not the only way to gain our rights, freedom and justice. We read about the life history of Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, and these stories gave us a lot of new ideas. We did not learn about these kinds of stories when we were in school. Such ideas were not popular then.

My life has changed now. I am changing and am not what I was before, but I still consider myself revolutionary. I want a big change in my community. I want my people to gain freedom, self-determination and justice, respect for our human rights and life security. Armed struggle is not the only solution and I am ashamed for seeking revenge. I don't mean that I hate armed struggle, for I understand that fighting is to protect our families, our children and our people and our territory. The most important thing is to have revolutionary thinking skills, to understand the root cause of the conflict and to build up a new vision for justice and a peaceful society.

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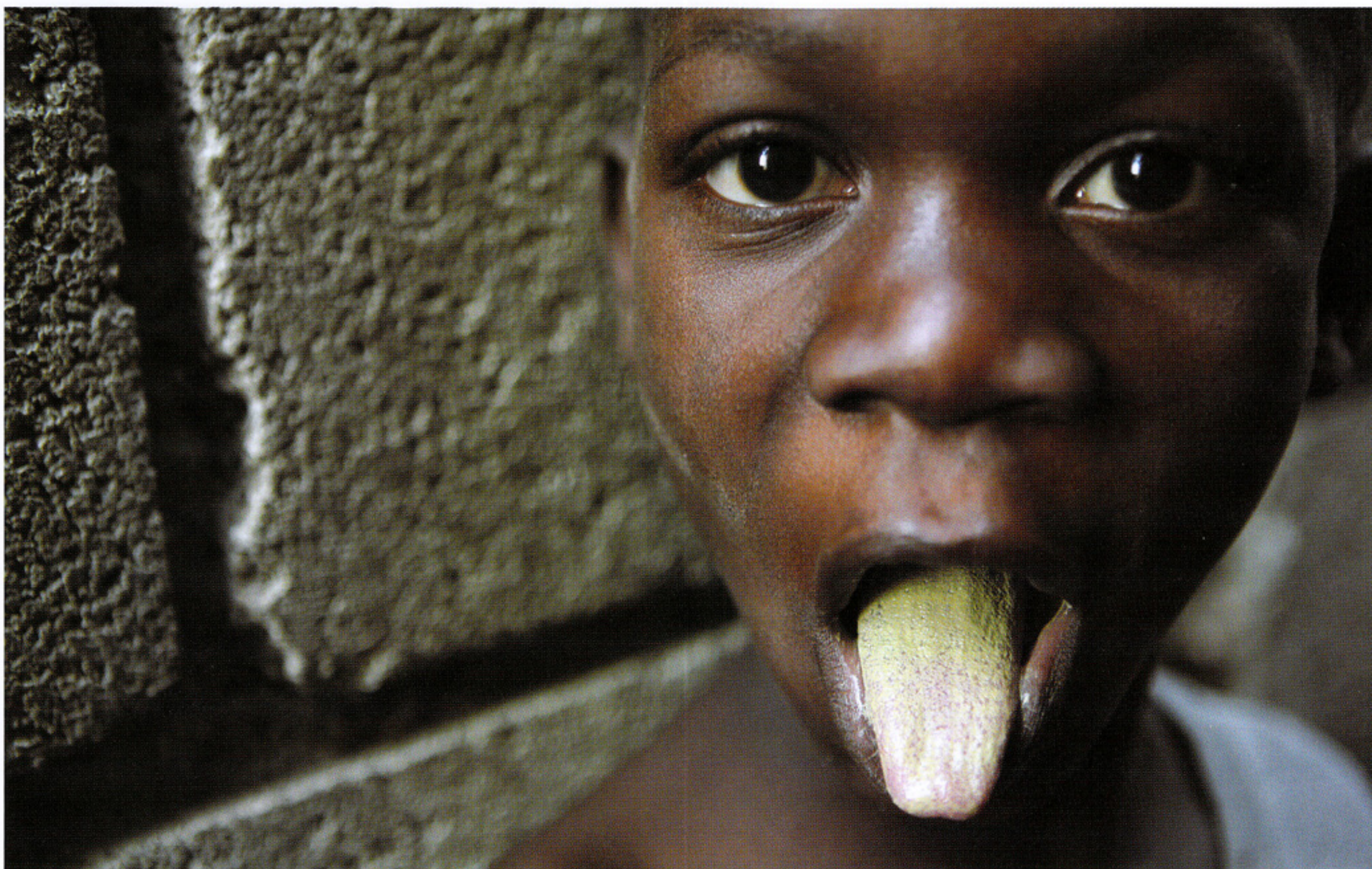
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A boy shows his tongue after eating a mud cookie. Due to rising prices and food shortages in Haiti, mud cookies – made of dirt, salt and vegetable shortening – are one of the very few options the country's poorest people have to ward off hunger.



WHILE THE CITIZENS OF THE WORLD'S WEALTHIEST NATIONS fret over retirement portfolios and the grim possibility of fewer toys next year, developing nations are facing the combined threat of rising food prices and global recession. The dangerously high costs of commodities like wheat and rice have come down in the wake of the market collapse, but hunger and starvation are still looming over millions. According to a recent BBC World Service study, 60% of people in 26 developing nations say that higher food and energy prices have had a direct and devastating impact on their lives. Now the head of the UN food agency is urging member nations to honor their financial commitments to developing countries, and warning that the imminent global recession will have serious ramifications for the world's poor and hungry. First World citizens need to stop staring morosely at market graphs and take a good look around. It's those who stand to lose the most who need a bailout.



Two Months Ago My Mom Left For The USA

She is worrying for my future. Many people said that Internally Displaced People (IDP) and refugees have no future. As I am her son, she does not want me getting old without life insurance and she said, "Come to America and you will become an American citizen, you will earn money and you can go back to Burma and start your work again. You are staying in Thailand without any legal travel documents, and Thai police can arrest you anytime, and it will be difficult for your future. I worry for you so much."

I understand my mom, and I know she loves me very much. I just want to say, "Mom don't worry for me." American citizenship can't give me my life insurance. I have faith in God, and He is the only one who can give me life insurance. I don't know what will happen tomorrow, but now I have to work here and serve my people and build my dream of providing for them a certain future.

My future is not to have properties nor to live a life of luxury. My future is to fight against any forms of injustice or oppression, to live in harmony with our environment and build up a peaceful society.

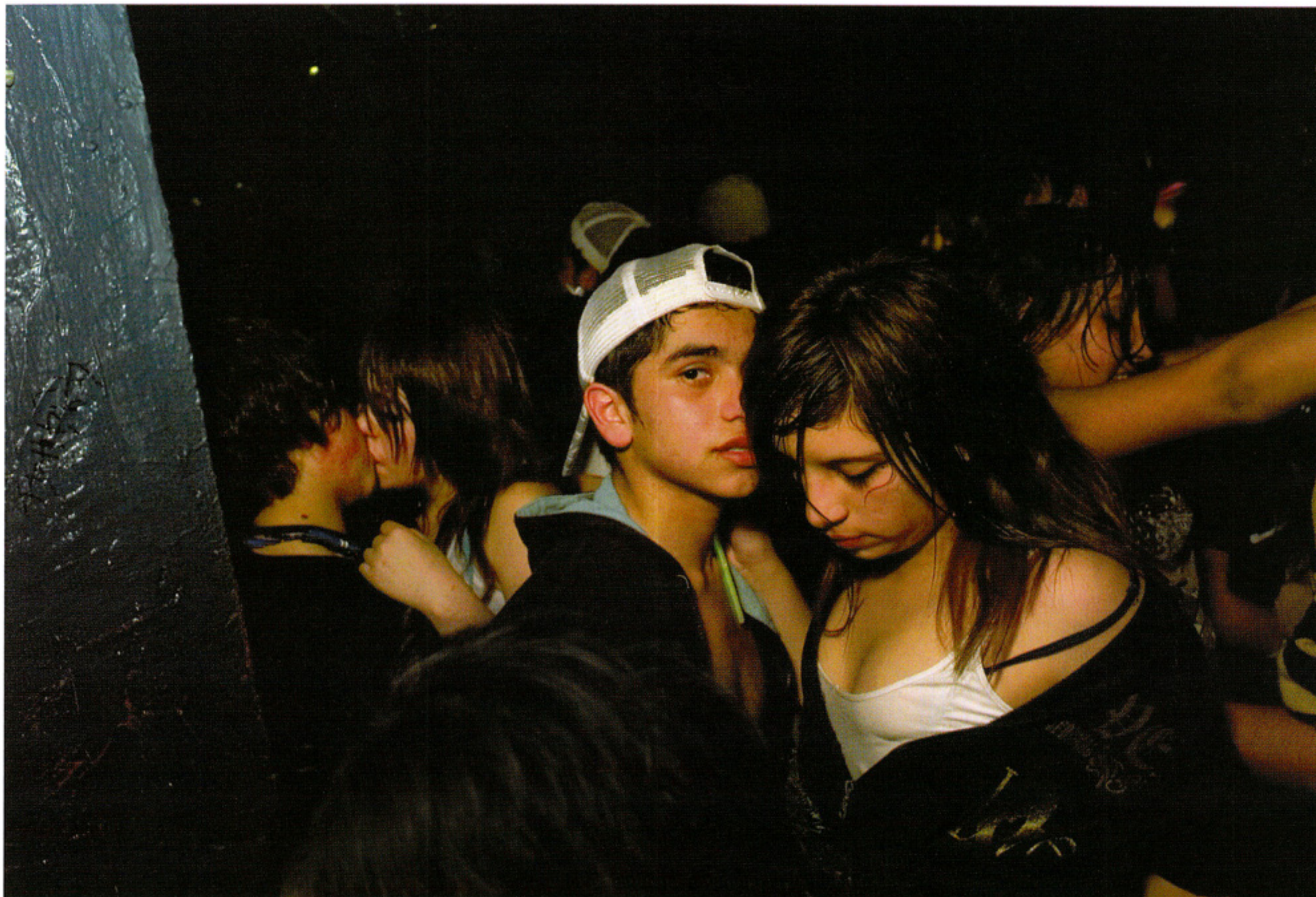


They are born into privilege. Into lives of parties and presents and pretty pink toes.

THEY ARE THE CENTER OF WORLDS, THE APPLES OF EYES. They are the feet stomping in store aisles, enunciating each demand. They are the GameBoy, the iPod and the Xbox into which they are perpetually plugged. They are defiant, obstinate, difficult to control. They are ADD, ADHD, Ritalin and Prozac. They speak one language, they worship one god. They are oblivious to hunger, oblivious to war. They are the children of the West, and with each compliant caving in to their ever more extravagant demands (like "pedi-

cure parties," which are growing increasingly popular with girls under ten), their parents are further severing their connection to reality. As the global market comes crashing down, children nursed on the milk of capitalism will find the values with which they have been raised increasingly irrelevant. As attitudes shift and mindsets change, these tiny consumers will find themselves not at the center of the world, but rightly relegated to the fringe.

Sarah Nardi



"We are not children of a dictatorship, we are children of democracy."

THE COUNTRY THAT HAS STRUGGLED FOR DECADES TO FREE ITSELF from the reign of Pinochet now has a very different kind of uprising on its hands. Chilean youth, seemingly drunk on newly discovered liberties, are staging an open sexual rebellion. Forming extensive online communities where suggestive photos and thinly veiled innuendo are traded like baseball cards, teenagers, some as young as 14, are making no apologies for their overt sexual curiosity. "We are not the children of the dictatorship, we are children of a democracy," one Chilean teenager told the *New York Times*. "There is much more of a rebellious spirit among young people today. There is much more freedom

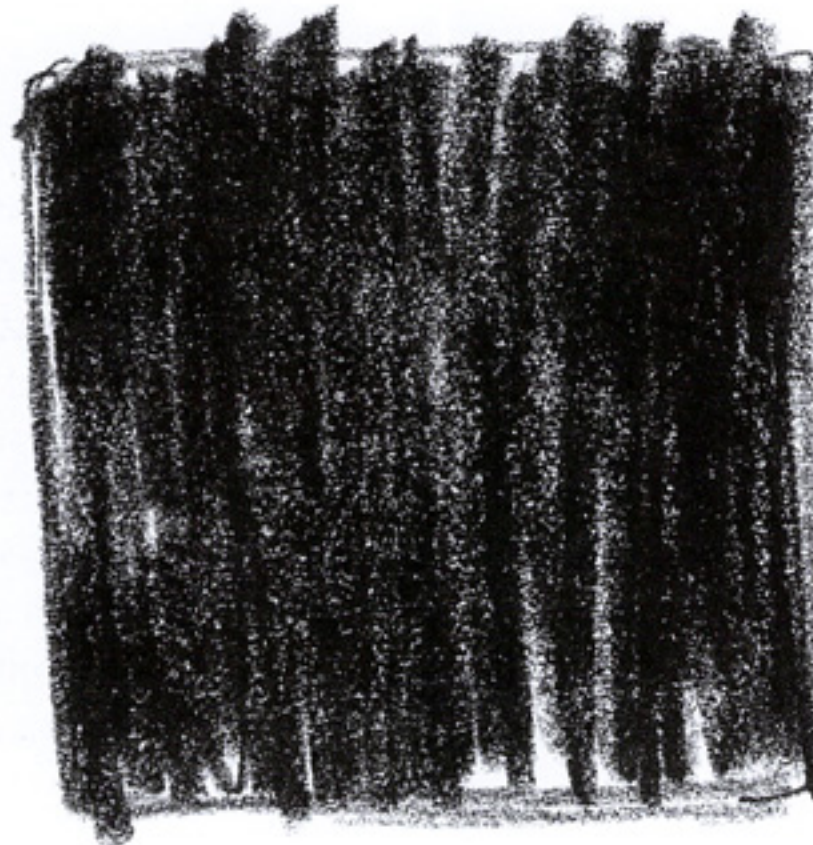
to explore everything." Exercising this freedom means staging massive "make-out" parties, some attracting over 4,500 teens, during which attendees compete to see who can pair up the most. In a mass of writhing bodies, of locking lips and tangled tongues, the Chilean youth struggle – not for freedom, not for justice, but for the title of "ponceo" – the one who makes out the most. One has to wonder what Chile's older generation, who saw colleagues and loved ones jailed and tortured for dissenting political beliefs, thinks of a youth determined to exercise hard-won freedoms by jamming its tongue down society's throat.

Sarah Nardi

My Dream

I want to set up "Appropriate Education" for my people and give them the seed of thinking. I went to India and studied at the School of Peace, and stayed in Visthar campus where I got a lot of ideas. In my campus (my dream), I will have a school and training center filled with trees, flowers and vegetables. Trees, flowers and vegetable that will give us medicine, food, fresh air and peace of mind.

I want to bring IDP children and children of war zones to my campus to study. I have no doubt that the true change in the future is education, but there are many types of education. I want the next generation to have the education of life, peace, equality, art, music, tradition, culture and the ways to overcome injustice and oppression and reflect on their life. Education that helps our society to be peaceful, to change yourself, to plant peace in your heart and share your peace with others and fight against any kind of oppression and injustice.



The Privates (1926-1945)



MARTIN PARRY MAGNUM

GRAB THE ATTENTION OF A PRIVATE once and you're liable to keep it forever. The Privates grew up in dramatic times, under the specter of the Great Depression, through the bleak days of World War II and then the uncertainty of the Cold War, and all this dark unrest has shaped them into a loyal group with a deep resistance to change. They are products of an era when America's role in international relations was viewed as overwhelmingly positive and largely unchallenged, and the Privates still believe in that sentiment. As a result, they are loath to compromise national well-being in favor of the global good. They are wary

of immigration and unsupportive of progressive social values. While this loyalty to the good old days might make the Privates seem staid and old-fashioned, it has resulted in a simplicity and a frugality that later generations have failed to inherit. The Privates remember the days of scarcity, and they grew up in a culture unfettered by the mass media. This has turned them into a thrifty, responsible bunch. The Privates shy away from rocking the boat, and while they may seem dull and traditional, they are fundamentally driven by an eagerness to please and protect.*

The Woodstocks (1946-1964)

THE WOODSTOCKS ARE A POWERFUL GROUP, not only because of their sheer numbers, but because they embody the sense of power and inspiration that comes with achieving political reform through protest. Today, the Woodstocks may exercise most of their formidable influence by driving a market of products designed to help them resist the ravages of time: think anti-wrinkle creams, hair dye and cosmetic surgery. They sit on the right of the political spectrum – they voted overwhelmingly for George Bush in 2000 and 2004 – but this group is responsible

for changing the face of society, and they will never lose that sense of power and possibility. The Woodstocks came of age in a heady time of political activism and grassroots change. They marched for civil rights and brought issues surrounding gender equality, sexual orientation and the environment into the social and political landscape. They brought an end to the Vietnam War. In doing so, the Woodstocks gave their children an inspiring example – they brought about real change by the force of their will.*



The Nikes (1965-1978)



THE NIKES ARE ALL ABOUT IMPULSE BUYING: they'll snap up big-ticket items without giving the budgetary consequences a second thought. The Nikes have a tendency to indulge their whims, which comes from growing up in an unstable era. These were some of the first latchkey kids – while their Woodstock parents were out trailblazing as the first generation of double-income families, the little Nikes had nothing but the television to keep them company after school. They came of age in the era of AIDS, and they saw international relations come into question as scandal after scandal unfurled on the

global political stage. All this strife may have shaped the Nikes into an unsettled group who calm themselves through consumption, but it has also given them a deep respect for real stability. Family values are of the utmost importance to this group, but in their subtle and unassuming way, they are redefining the concept of family into something progressive and malleable. In the same vein, it is the Nikes who are exploring alternatives in schooling, medicine and art and quietly bringing about more grassroots approaches.*

The First Globals (1979-1990)



the origins of the items they purchase and want assurance that they were produced under humane conditions. Although the First Globals are willing peons of marketers, they are ushering in a new approach to consumerism and politics. The world of the First Globals is international and interconnected, and because of their eager interest in fostering a global community, this group is poised to bring about real change.*

**Generation profiles are based on concepts from The Way We'll Be: The Zogby Report on the Transformation of the American Dream by John Zogby.*

The New Globals (1991-)



THE FIRST GLOBALS EXHIBIT A RARE DICHOTOMY not seen in the other groups. They are maturing in an era of unprecedented worldwide advertising – they are the most marketed-to generation in history – which is having a huge effect on their psyches. But while First Globals covet things and obsess over image, they also embody an unparalleled sense of internationalism and a unique empathy. They are products of globalization, and this has given them a sense of understanding of, and interest in, other cultures. They are concerned about human rights and the environment. They're likely to want to know

A white mannequin is suspended in the air by thin wires, holding a large, tilted rectangular sign. The mannequin's head is visible behind the top of the sign, and its legs are visible below it. The background is dark, and a spotlight illuminates the mannequin and the sign. The sign has the word "Loners" in a large, serif font, followed by a paragraph of text in a smaller, sans-serif font.

Loners

The future is always difficult to quantify, but tomorrow comes with at least one guarantee: it will be lonely. The number of single-person households across the globe is growing at an alarming rate. Struggling with feelings of loneliness and isolation, more and more people are turning to online dating and social networking sites to try and muster up some companionship. Meanwhile, divorce rates are at an all-time high.

Hi Editor,

This is a piece I wrote for a friend who died a very violent death this summer. I'm a youth worker for a film and video mentoring project in the Downtown Eastside, and the coordinator of the Purple Thistle Centre.

This piece is very close to my heart. A little long – 1,300 words – but I think it's right up your alley. I would ask that you exercise your emotional sensitivity when editing it. I'd like to think that it falls under the 'spiritual mindbomb' category.

It's about imperialism, culture, youth, school and institutions, and the psychogeography of colonized lands.

My work has previously been published in *Adbusters* anonymously in the issue edited by Dr. Matt Hern.

Thanks for your time.

Devon



SINGLETOWN IS A DROOG AND KESSELSKRAMER PROJECT.
KESSELSKRAMER IS A COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY BASED IN AMSTERDAM.
DROOG IS A CONCEPTUAL DESIGN COMPANY BASED IN AMSTERDAM.
EXHIBITION PHOTOGRAPHY BY LIZ HINGLEY



A Jacket for Lonely People

INCREASE THE POSSIBILITY OF ENJOYING a social situation during your day with this jacket made of Velcro strips. Wear the jacket while walking in public spaces in the hope that you might bump into another lonely single wearing the jacket. When two jackets come in contact, they connect, uniting you with a potential mate.



Today my dear friend hanged himself. His life was violence. All he ever wanted was love.

I am looking at his MySpace profile, wondering how long it will take for the news to finally trickle through the gravel irrigation to his internet friends.

I sleep late dreaming of a city half under an ocean of smoky gray quartz. In this dream city I am always taking trains, always to see my sisters.

The neighborhoods in the dream city are like mold, each sustained in itself but part of a larger colony. The streets are dusty, crawling with people and rich smells of nutmeg and clove, dirt, salt, ocean, sex, tomato plants and motor oil. Everyone is a bit surly because everyone is poor. But everyone helps each other because that's how we live. When I don't take trains between spores I do parkour with friends, and fight cops or other gangs.

You are there a lot, jumping around with that crazy fire that is all and only yours.

I was born in Chilliwack on the floodplain at the 'heart' of the valley in the wake of Coqualeetza. Even as a child I understood that a devastating thing had happened here long before my birth.

"That TB hospital/Friendship Centre used to be a kid prison-torture chamber, sweetie."

"Well honey, all the brown people in town live on the reserves with no shoes and the dog gangs because our elders were racist family-destroying fuckers."

"Grandpa made his living from scalps, baby."

"Ours is a stolen land and rotted peoples."

"It is our heritage, our legacy to you."

My father told me a story about doing mescaline on a beach in Greece. He said god was a Dog and a huge Black Woman.

She told him space-time was like playing dominos. It's a mescaline story, but I believe it. I see people set up for the knockdown all the time.

God has always come to me as strange animals. As inordinately big spiders, a thousand tiny crabs, birds I've never seen before, brilliant and intimidating little kids.

I dream of my elementary school and wearing a fairytale princess dress. The school has started medicating me, and I have to go to the office to get my pills. One day I cut through the gym on my way there. Out of the locker rooms (in which I was assaulted as a child by an angry old teacher) comes a stick-like and twitching old woman like the spindly remains of a crow on a roadway. With her is a huge, hulking GreenMan, half rotted and laughing. She speaks in bloodsplatters and deathrattles and her cohort rapes me on the elementary school stage. When he is done, I am still in my dress. CrowLady's talons extend like fishhooks and she rips open my guts. Spills me out cold on the floor. I remember her voice and the ebb of my bloodtide out into the world, like a balloon slowly popping.

She visited me again a few years later, living with a crystal meth dealer in a punk house on a moldy twin mattress with my convict lover. She met me in a Shale gray storm on a rocky pinnacle covered in grass in the middle of a floodplain. We fucked, her dressed as a she-wolf who coos to me about rotting and my organs and the memory of the Land. She pulled a mass of dirt and woodbugs and centipedes and bits of rusted metal and hard shredded white plastic out of my cunt, all mixed with blood that she wiped on my face and chest.

"My legacy to you."

Hugging Hands

DON'T RELY ON OTHERS TO PROVIDE you with the affection you need. This scarf replicates the feeling of being held in a warm embrace. Provide yourself with constant hugs without having to go to the trouble of using somebody else's arms.



Animal Companions

PETS CAN PROVIDE THE LONELY SINGLE with welcome companionship, but animals do require a level of care and attention that might not always fit in with your busy schedule. This handy chair provides you with instant, convenient company: sitting in the chair automatically inflates plastic pet companions. When you get up, the pets deflate and you don't have to worry about them until your next bout of loneliness.



Love & Sex with Robots

THIS SOCIALLY APT NEW BOOK may hold the key for the singles of the future. It explores the possibility of a new romantic and sexual partner who will never demand too much of a single's time or space – a robot. Guaranteed to take the loneliness out of your single life.

I walk the streets and I see La Llorona screaming for her children of the floodplain, jealously drowning the sons and daughters that are left standing after School. Ghost people help La Malinche translate her once red words into white smoke through a plastic and glass tube, inspecting the sidewalk for what has fallen between the cracks. Tezcatlipolca is rigging the ports, bouncing death through smoke and mirrors, a network of reserved spaces and underground opium tunnels confiscated by cops. Metal birds of the Morrigan feast on the heads of those washed at the Ford oil sands, the hipsters wear old headdresses. The mouths of our brightest crammed with Zoloft and Ritalin and alcohol from the hand of the All Father.

Odin did not age well. Impotence and imperial bloodlust have turned Santa Claus into Saturn again. We devour all our children in his name.

You are gone. You left because you were tired and I know what from. I witnessed your love and pain. I honor and remember your struggle.

I'm sorry they treated you that way.

I wish you all the love you ever wanted.

The background of the entire page is an abstract composition of thick, expressive brushstrokes in black and bright yellow. The strokes are layered and textured, creating a sense of movement and depth. The word 'reconnect' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, slightly tilted upwards to the right, and is positioned over the upper-middle section of the image.

reconnect

Rewilding the earth is a life's work for most dark green primitivists or de-industrialists. This process acknowledges how thousands of years of human settlement, agriculture and gray industry have created a planet that may be wild in parts but is – from an ecological perspective – almost entirely artificial or altered in some way. Where ordinary conservation focuses on managing the actions of people rather than nature itself and on improving the look and feel of landscape from a human perspective, rewilding embraces the act of untaming, unmanaging and letting go to wilderness.

Some rewilders have already started to prepare for life outside the box. They are reintroducing themselves to such forgotten skills as building shelter, finding water, tracking and foraging for food, flint knapping, making fire, extracting clay, navigating and learning how to heal using the plants, animals and materials that occur naturally in their bioregions. By reconnecting with their feral fury, they can defend their lives, strive for a liberated existence, develop more trust in their intuition, listen to their instincts and attempt to regain a balance that has been virtually lost after thousands of years of civilized domestication.

From Issue #45 of Positive News, www.positivenews.org.



If there is one festival dedicated to artistic progress and the spiritual transmogrification of our society, it's the Burning Man festival. Six thousand people descended on Black Rock Desert in Nevada during the Labor Day weekend for a commerce-free, "American Dream"-themed weekend of communal living, radical self-expression, public nudity, psychedelic drug rushes and intense UV rays. The event climaxed with the burning of an effigy of a giant man, which symbolizes to many the intensity of our shared humanity.

I'D LIKE TO APOLOGIZE FOR the incredible shortcomings of my generation. I'm seventeen, and I can't stand what we stand for and what we think passes for individuality and rebellion. So many of us seem to think that individuality and identity exist in what you wear and what you own. I wish that we could realize that we have no identity. We are truly lost, and yet we have no desire to find our way. The truly tragic part about this is that we must be the generation to stand up and say "fuck you" to the powers that be, to those that would rape this planet for profit and watch their children (that would be us) slide into social and environmental collapse. But, honestly, what can be expected of us? Our parents stood up against the war in Vietnam, fought for civil rights, championed the Women's Liberation Movement, revolutionized the counterculture and then, around 1977 or 1978, turned around and sold out for a quiet life in the suburbs with their 2.54 kids and ranch homes and the occasional line of coke. They raised us to be selfish, apathetic children who care more about what we can buy to make us "cool" rather than what we can do to change our world for the better, and we followed them without question. We revel in our faux-hedonism and refuse to even acknowledge the rather bleak reality that surrounds us. For this, you have my deepest apologies.

Jacques Chouinard
New Mexico, USA

co-opted and claimed as their own. It is a disgrace to all alternative music of the past. It is a disgrace to quality photography, poetry and art in general.

The giant irony here is that many hipsters surely read *Adbusters* and stand up for the anti-consumerism you endorse while somehow not realizing that they're a part of that rampant consumerism.

Nicolle Esparo
Poulsbo, WA, USA



generation of young, concerned and active citizens. Perhaps the purpose of the hipster is to provide an example of what the end of creativity and activism may look like and, as a result, motivate the next generation to break free, bring something new and make stuff better.

Graham Barr
Montreal, PQ, Canada

I KNOW TWO PEOPLE WHO WOULD have been called counterculture in the 60s or "hipsters" five years ago. They were in an indie band in high school and were devoted to music as a way of life and not just a hobby. One of them no longer plays music – perhaps because of modern cultural nihilism. The other, with the benefit of well-connected parents, networked his way onto an indie label and now has a job in the music industry.

The counterculture as the Beat Generation and Boomers knew it was always an artifice. It could not have existed without a liberal society that provided room, board and soapboxes. Yet it was simultaneously energized by something that was not a brand or a set of rules. Out of the blue this summer, my friend's mom described to me what it was like to drive through Georgetown in the 60s, where anti-war rallies often closed the streets. There were people sitting on the sidewalks, wearing whatever was hip then, openly smoking pot and handing out flowers to the drivers and passengers. A librarian at Carleton told me stories about how back-to-nature adventurers in upstate Minnesota would share the copy of the *Whole Earth Catalog* at the library, since they didn't have the pocket change to buy their own copy. Merely by rejecting the norm, these people became memorable to those they encountered. They are admirable not because they were intelligent, but because they were pursuing their own goals and not one that they had chosen from the default selection. Believe it or not, "hippie" was not a brand they had decided to apply to themselves but a legitimate ad-hoc creation.

Avery Morrow
via email

I'M WRITING TO THANK DOUGLAS Haddow for writing *Hipster – The Dead End of Western Civilization* [*Adbusters* #79], which is the best piece of first person journalism I've read since Hunter S. Thompson died. Haddow's critique of this soulless "counterculture" is dead on, and I'm speaking from the point of view of a teenager who has just finished her junior year of high school, surrounded by self-proclaimed hipsters.

I think the saddest part of this trend is not only that what hipsters are wearing and buying is detached from meaning; but that most hipsters believe they are causing change, perhaps even a revolution.

This belief is not only dangerous, it is a disgrace to all the other true counterculture movements of the past whose styles hipsters have removed from context and meaning,

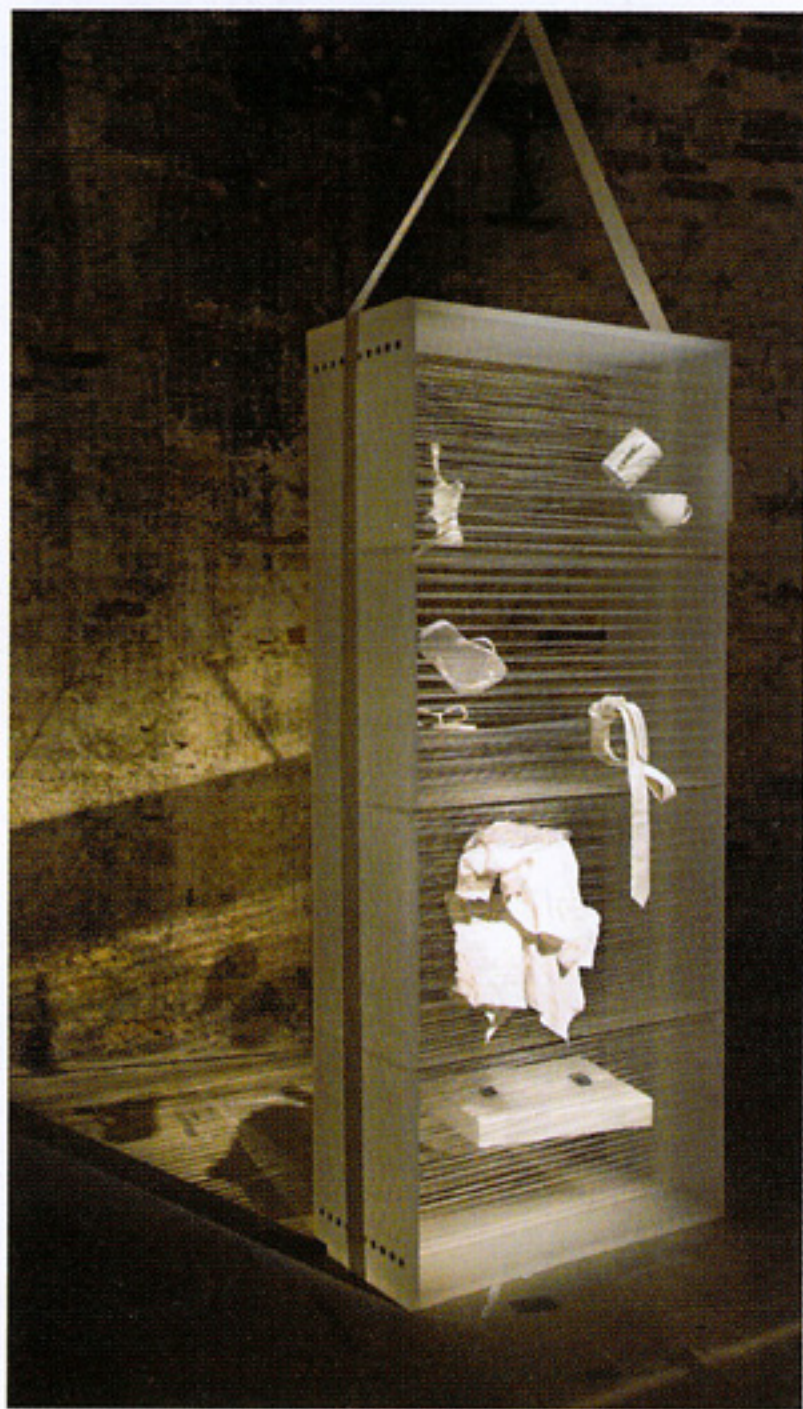
I'VE NEVER READ SUCH A preemptively pessimistic piece of journalism as Douglas Haddow's article on the hipster. The reason he is so able to cite the social and historical importance of punk and hip hop of 20 years ago is because we have since been able to put them in their proper context. Punk rock symbolized the dissatisfaction that many had with the establishment, regardless of the amount of studs on one's jacket, while hip hop provided inspiration to poor African Americans. To that end, no one knows what the hipster may spawn. This is because we have not seen what comes after them. Until there is a follow up, a new style, street wear or mentality, the hipster will remain anomalous. Just like punk rock, or hip-hop, before history had its say. Perhaps a generation of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer drinkers, wearing V-neck shirts from American Apparel and riding fixed gear bikes will give way to a new

I READ THE HIPSTER ARTICLE AND I felt jaded, slightly confused and slightly outraged. I know what a hipster is, but I'm not sure that hipsters are that different from the various

mainstream youth of other generations.

Parts of the article seemed to suggest that counterculture is dead and all revolutionary roots have been lost and converted into a burning pile of manure.

To say that “punk was plasticized and hip hop lost its impetus for social change, and all of the formerly dominant streams of ‘counter-



culture’ have merged together” seems somewhat ignorant to me.

Go to a punk show, visit the literature tables, watch the crowds raise their fists with charged ideals. I am distanced from hip-hop culture, but I am not blind. Many who hold it dear would reject the argument that it has become completely devoid of meaning. Look at the graffiti that lines our streets and tell me that it is not influenced by underground hip hop. Yes, subcultures have been penetrated by capitalism, and its marketing poisons everything it touches, but it does not kill off movements.

Alana Schultz
via email

DID ED VAN DER ELSKEN not photograph your precious poets of the Left Bank? Would *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* not read like an exercise in absolute slacker ethics? Did the failed prophets of Debord’s vision not hate the posers, the surrealists and the architects? Were the drunk revolutionaries passed out in Moineau’s not those of your beloved May ‘68?

Was Johnny Rotten not an absolute expression of the malaise of Thatcherite England? Are the crowds of hipsters, with their fixed gears whipping about the city, living on dollar-slice pizza and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, are they not Vaneigem’s juvenile delinquents, does their happiness not justify existence itself? Be careful not to attack leisure, for leisure is the real revolutionary question.

Sean Orr
via email

Messy

Don’t let something as mundane as folding your clothes impede your busy lifestyle. You can simply throw your clothes at this handy wardrobe, freeing up your precious time for more important things.



GREEDY PIG

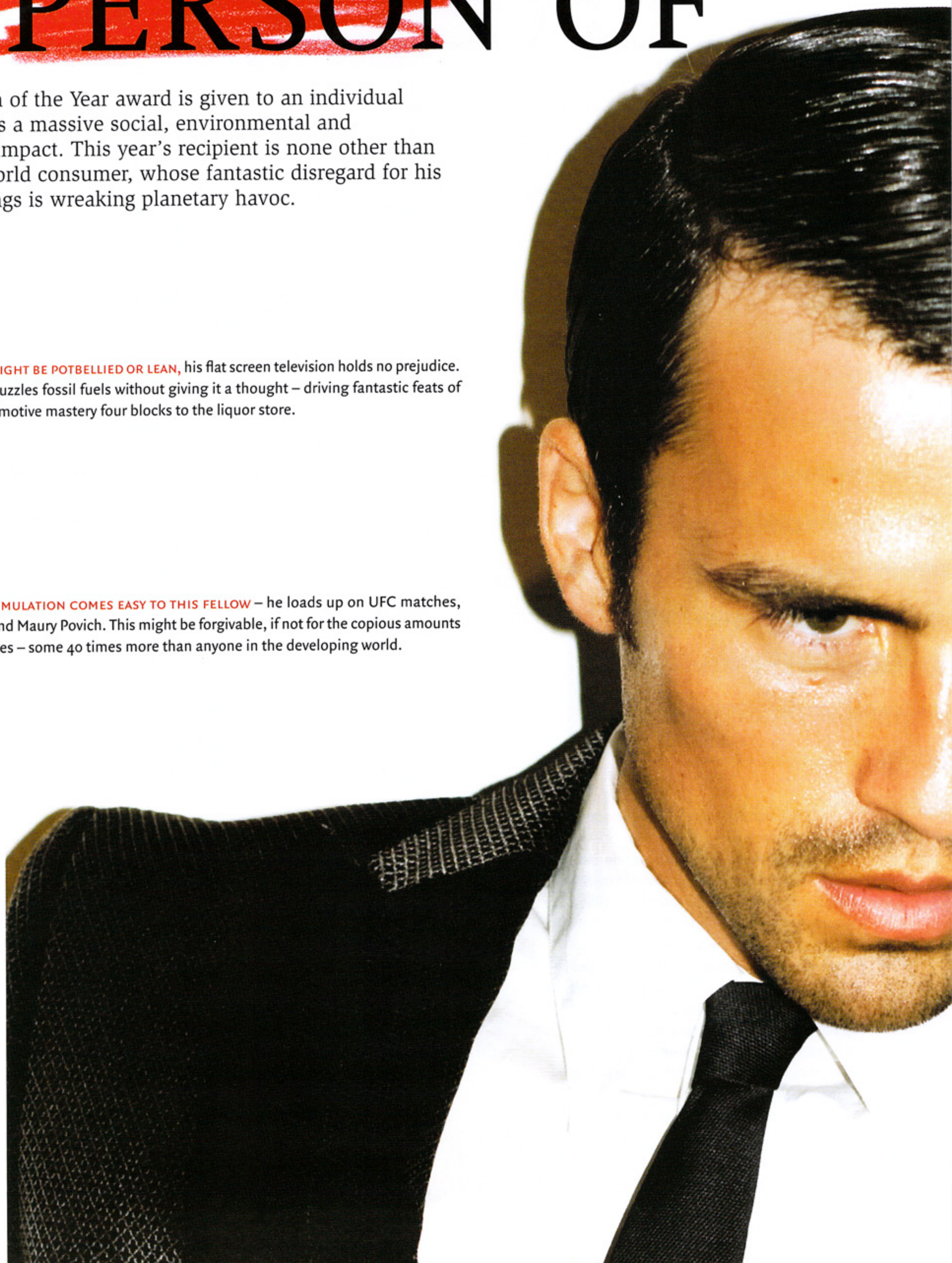
PERSON OF

The Person of the Year award is given to an individual who wields a massive social, environmental and economic impact. This year's recipient is none other than the first-world consumer, whose fantastic disregard for his surroundings is wreaking planetary havoc.

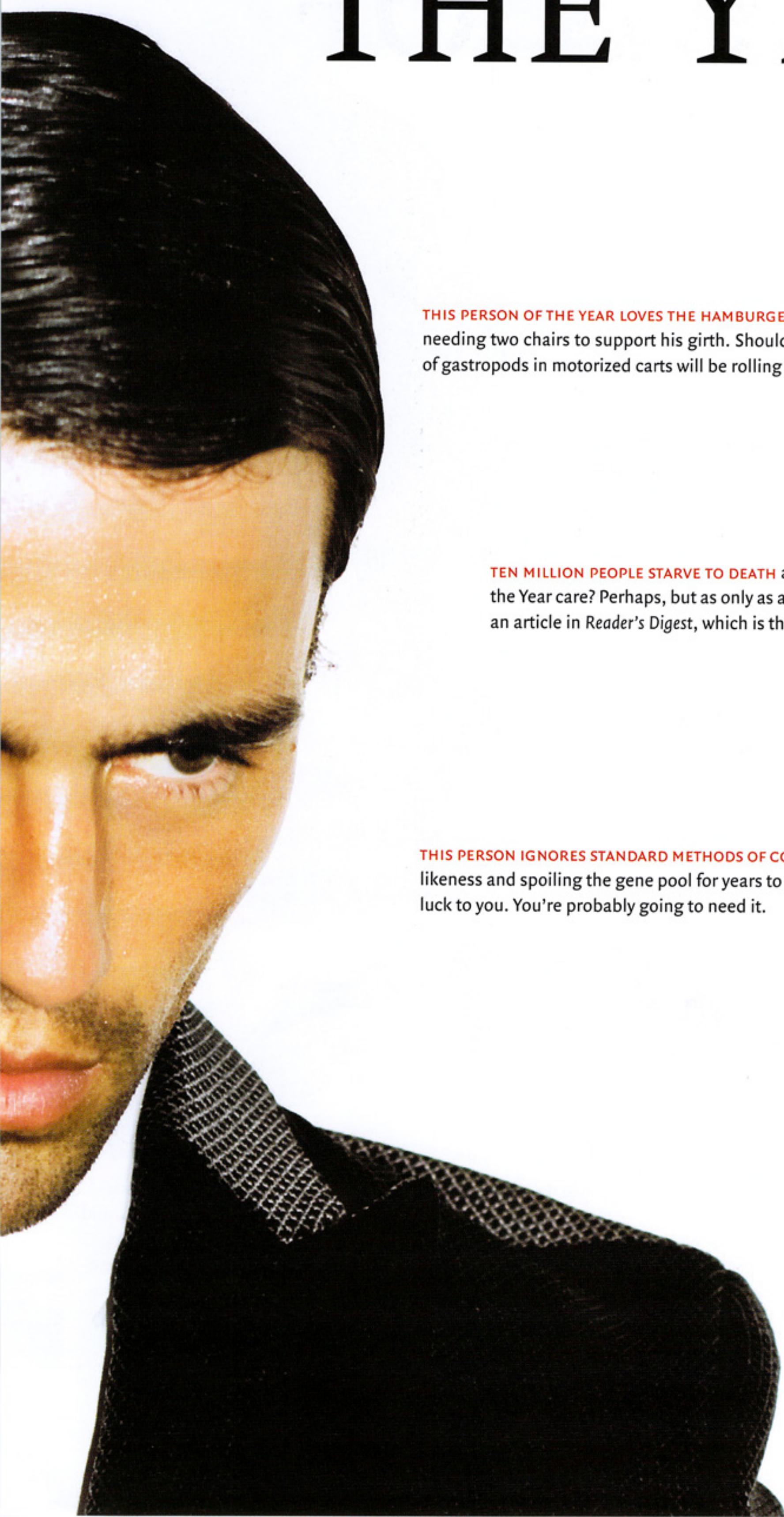
HE MIGHT BE POTBELLIED OR LEAN, his flat screen television holds no prejudice. He guzzles fossil fuels without giving it a thought – driving fantastic feats of automotive mastery four blocks to the liquor store.

NUMBSKULL STIMULATION COMES EASY TO THIS FELLOW – he loads up on UFC matches, Mariah Carey and Maury Povich. This might be forgivable, if not for the copious amounts of energy he uses – some 40 times more than anyone in the developing world.

PHOTO BY
JOE LALLY
@ DE FACTO



THE YEAR



THIS PERSON OF THE YEAR LOVES THE HAMBURGERS. Loves 'em. He's a hog of epic proportions, often needing two chairs to support his girth. Should the current obesity epidemic continue, squadrons of gastropods in motorized carts will be rolling around local food courts.

TEN MILLION PEOPLE STARVE TO DEATH around the world every year. Does the Person of the Year care? Perhaps, but as only as a passing notion, a fleeting sympathy sparked by an article in *Reader's Digest*, which is then quelled by taking a warm bath.

THIS PERSON IGNORES STANDARD METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION, spawning generations in his likeness and spoiling the gene pool for years to come. Kudos, Person of the Year, and good luck to you. You're probably going to need it.



RIGHT NOW WE ARE WITNESSING the biggest mass extinction of plant and animal species since the age of the dinosaurs. Global warming is only making things worse, with scientists predicting that more than a million plants and animals may be driven out of their existing habitats and into extinction as the climates changes. Scientists warn that if we continue on this path, we could drive our own species into extinction, too.

The good news is that the environmental movement is thriving. Today there are tens of thousands of green groups

doing meaningful work throughout the world. But surprisingly, some of the largest, best-funded organizations look and act more like corporations. Their leaders hold titles such as CEO and chairman of the board and earn salaries – complete with fringe benefits and expense accounts – that put them in the top one percent of US taxpayers. Let me say that again: they make more than 99 percent of all Americans who pay taxes. How can the environmental business be booming when the environment itself is in such peril? As it turns out, big business has quite a hand in it.

Two years ago, I went to work for Conservation International, one of the world's preeminent environmental groups, thinking I would be working for one of the global good guys – an organization that fights to save species and their habitats around the world. But what I found was a corporation hooked on corporate donations. Counting on that money and support to keep programs running and pay some of the highest salaries in the nonprofit world, CI and, as I would later learn, several other large international nature groups have perfected a form of ethical gymnastics: while their very existence is predicated on saving nature, they remain mum on the environmental crimes of their own corporate partners. These groups essentially engage in greenwashing on behalf of their polluting corporate sponsors.

doing more for the polluters than for endangered species, the big green groups press on with their “business models.”

My book, *Green, Inc., An Environmental Insider Reveals How A Good Cause Has Gone Bad*, an exposé of the international nature conservation business, came out at the end of September, just as the US financial system went into a nose-dive. By early October, when the world's conservation elites gathered in Barcelona for their biggest meeting of the year, markets were crashing around the world, spreading panic and doubt about the wisdom of unbridled free market economics. But the conservationists, corporate CEOs, billionaire philanthropists, and heads of state and royal houses seemed not to have heard the news. In Barcelona's conference rooms and banquet halls, the conversation centered on how environmental groups must become even more like corporations. Aboard

HAS THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT LOST ITS SOUL?

CONSIDER THESE FACTS:

- The oil company, BP (formerly British Petroleum), has given millions of dollars to environmental groups and spent hundreds of millions on its Beyond Petroleum advertising campaign in which it extols itself as a leader in developing solar, wind and other renewable energy sources. Last year, however, it spent just four percent of its total expenditures on these endeavors.
- BP is on probation until 2010 as a result of the massive oil spill from its pipeline on the North Slope of Alaska. US government investigators excoriated the company for failing to conduct routine maintenance that could have prevented the spill, yet there was no public outrage from the environmental groups courted by the oil conglomerate.
- Eight years ago Environmental Defense Fund teamed up with Federal Express to develop a hybrid truck that was hailed as “revolutionary.” FedEx promised to have 30,000 low-carbon vehicles on the road by 2013. Today, FedEx has 170 of those vehicles on the road, less than one percent of its fleet of 80,000 ground vehicles. Nevertheless, FedEx and EDF continue to hold up the joint venture as a “success story.”
- Finally there's Conservation International's “success story” with its corporate sponsor, Bunge Ltd., that has saved 120,000 hectares of species-rich Brazilian savannah. Bunge, however, is one of the chief financiers behind the expansion of soybean plantations contributing to the clearing of 2.2 million hectares of the South American country's savannah lands each year, according to CI's own estimates.

a yacht owned by a Saudi prince, Valli Moosa, president of the World Conservation Union, Ted Turner and other VIPs “inspired the world” with business school jargon about “best practices” and “success stories,” according to the official press release. Robert McCormick, a retired economics professor from Clemson University, went so far as to tell the New York Times that the only way to “save” nature is to put a price tag on it.

Are these developments further signs that the movement, as some have suggested, is dead? Or has it, at least, lost its soul – its very essence and moral compass? I'm not yet sure. My book has certainly inspired a great number of angry critics, incensed that I would dare question the sacred cows of the movement. But those same online journals and blogs have also attracted posts that suggest there's still hope. One comment that particularly moved me came from a conservationist in Indonesia where rampant deforestation is not only threatening the continued existence of the orangutan, but has made the Southeast Asian archipelago the world's third-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions.

“I'm so relieved that *finally* someone from the inside speaks about this,” she wrote, promising to follow in my footsteps.

Assuming there are many more people who share this Indonesian environmentalist's views, it may not be too late to resuscitate the environmental movement – both body and soul.

Christine MacDonald's book Green, Inc.: An Environmental Insider Reveals How a Good Cause Has Gone Bad was published in the fall of 2008.

Despite mounting evidence that this corporate courtship is



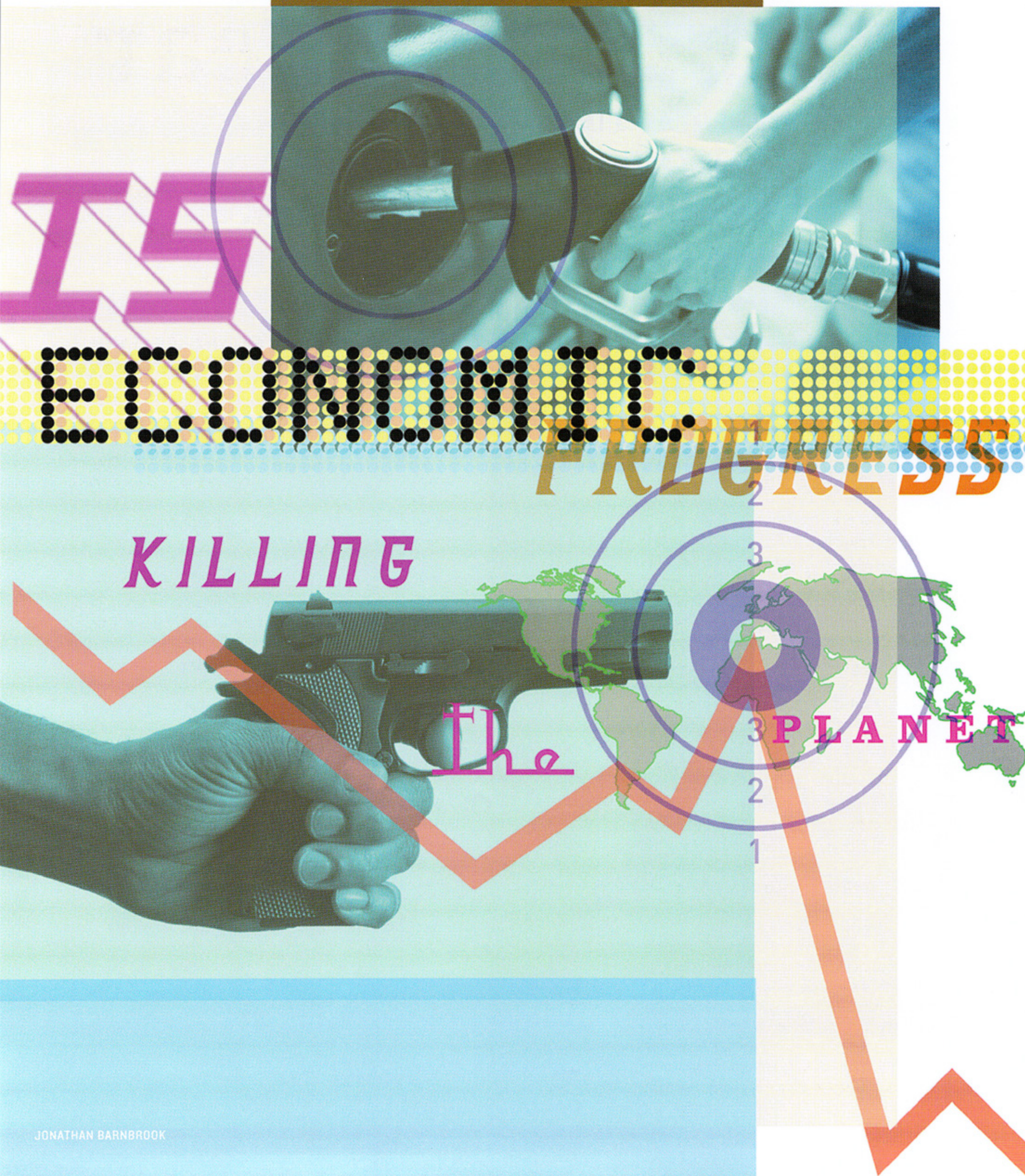


EDWARD MORAN
THE VALLEY IN THE SEA, 1862.
COURTESY INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART

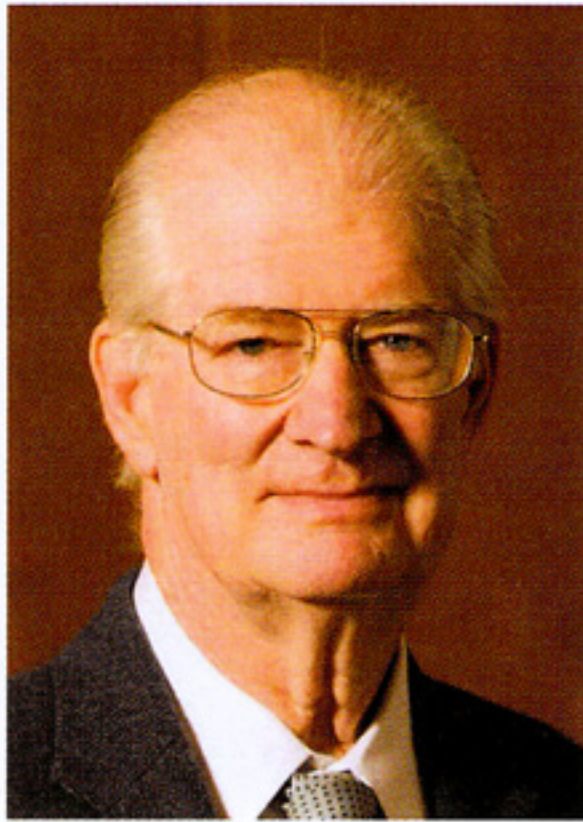


Who could have guessed that in 1910, when the first Model T came off Henry Ford's assembly line, the fossil-fueled automobile was going to be an ecological disaster and one of the biggest technological blunders of all time – one that may ultimately do us in.

THE BIG QUESTION:



Man of the Year



HERMAN DALY ISN'T YOUR AVERAGE NEOCLASSICAL ECONOMIST, though he may well have been were it not for certain key events in his life. Like most graduate students of economics, Daly once believed that growth was the key to solving humanity's problems. But while earning his doctoral degree under one of the most respected economists of the day, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, Daly's confidence in growth was shaken. Despite having made significant contributions in the field of neoclassical economics, Georgescu-Roegen, at the time of becoming Daly's mentor, had started to uncover a critical flaw in neoclassical theory: it failed to take into account how economic processes consume resources and generate wastes. Further growth meant a quicker rate of resource extraction and ever more waste. That seed of doubt that Georgescu-Roegen managed to plant in Daly's young mind began to grow when Daly read *Silent Spring*, a groundbreaking book that warned of the dangers of industrial chemicals in the food chain. After accepting a teaching position in Brazil in 1968, Daly observed firsthand how population growth was negatively impacting the local environment. His faith in growth had eroded. In its place sprung a grave concern over the apparent indifference his fellow economists displayed to the relationship between the economy and the environment.

In the 1960s and 70s, it was practically unfathomable that an economist would question the growth model. Yet once Daly realized that the economy is a growing subset of a non-growing planet, he had no choice but to sound the alarm. Humanity, he argued, had to shift to a steady-state economy, one in which demands placed on the ecosystem would remain safely in bounds. This would imply shifting economic policy from a focus on stoking growth, where the scale of physical demands on ecosystems

perpetually increased, to a focus on development, meaning humanity would have to learn to make wiser use of a modest and more stable level of materials taken from the environment. Daly was able to make little headway among fellow economists, but his views were recognized as key insights by natural scientists and the emerging environmental movement.

For four decades, Daly has worked tirelessly to challenge the growth dogma that modern society has so enthusiastically imbibed. Publishing several books and more than 100 articles, Daly has even tried to effect change from within, spending six frustrating years at the World Bank, where he observed how misguided policies emerged from "an unrealistic vision of development as the generalization of Northern over-consumption." In 1994, Daly left the World Bank for the University of Maryland. To date, he has received the Right Livelihood Award as well as the Heineken Prize for Environmental Science awarded by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Thanks to the overwhelming evidence natural scientists have amassed demonstrating that if we want to avoid catastrophic climate change, humanity must stop pumping CO₂ into the atmosphere, mainstream economists are grudgingly coming to accept the fact that there are ecological limits to our growth after all. While the majority have yet to admit that growth is a false idol, once one limit is accepted, the likelihood that there are others quickly follows. Once these limits are accepted, the whole plausibility of continued growth crumbles. Herman Daly has long been working to move the goalposts, and his brilliant economic insights are changing how the game is played. He has shown ways to tame the global economy's insane appetite for resources. In a world where we must make more modest demands on nature, he has focused on ensuring that we use those limited resources to produce real wealth that addresses real human needs. Herman Daly is a game changer and a paradigm shifter. He is illuminating the path that will lead us away from ecological and economic crises. Thus, at this critical juncture in our history, *Adbusters* has chosen him as Man of the Year.

Adbusters Staff



The Crisis

by Herman Daly with Tom Green

THE TURMOIL AFFECTING THE WORLD ECONOMY unleashed by the US sub-prime debt crisis isn't really a crisis of "liquidity" as it is often called. A liquidity crisis would imply that the economy was in trouble because businesses could no longer obtain credit and loans to finance their investments. In fact, the crisis is the result of the overgrowth of financial assets relative to growth of real wealth—basically the opposite of too little liquidity. We need to take a step back and explore some of the fundamentals that growth-obsessed economists and commentators tend to neglect.

After winning the Nobel Prize for chemistry, Frederick Soddy decided he could do greater good for humanity by turning his talents to economics, a field he felt lacked a connection to biophysical reality. In his 1926 book *Wealth, Virtual Wealth and Debt: The Solution of the Economic Paradox*, (a book that presaged the market crash of 1929), Soddy pointed out the fundamental difference between real wealth—buildings, machinery, oil, pigs—and virtual wealth, in the form of money and debt.

Soddy wrote that real wealth was subject to the inescapable entropy law of thermodynamics and would rot, rust, or wear out with age, while money and debt—as accounting devices invented by humans—were subject only to the laws of mathematics.

Rather than decaying, virtual wealth, in the form of debt, compounding at the rate of interest, actually grows without bounds.

Soddy used concrete examples to demonstrate the flaw in economic thinking. A farmer who raises pigs faces biophysical limits on how many pigs he can take to market. But if that pig farmer took on debt—a promise to repay at a future date—he would in effect be issuing a claim or lien on his future production of pigs. If he borrowed the equivalent value of 100 pigs, he could represent the loan on his balance sheet as "-100 pigs."

While debt as the farmer's accounting entry is negative, negative pigs do not really exist. If the farmer should suffer a series of lean years and be unable to pay the interest, he might soon owe more pigs than could be raised on his farm. After a year, with interest looming, he'd show "-110 pigs"; in 5 years, "-161"; in 40 (assuming a patient bank), "-4526." When the bank finally came to call on the pig farmer to collect repayment of its loan, it could well find that most of the virtual wealth that had grown so appealingly on its books had to be written off as a loss.

Soddy's insights show us that the institutions of a growth economy lead to the type of crisis that hit the US economy in 2008. Real wealth is concrete. Financial assets are abstractions. Existing real wealth serves as a lien on future debt. For example, the 100 dollars of virtual wealth that I carry in my wallet are a lien on real wealth in that those dollars enable me to buy pork at the store.

The problem that we're seeing in the US has arisen because the amount of real wealth is not a sufficient lien to guarantee the staggering outstanding debt which has exploded as a result of banks' ability to create money, loans given out on shaky assets and the US government's deficit, which has been stoked by financing the war and recent tax cuts. All of these factors are exacerbated by the compounding mechanism on debt. The debt is growing, and consequently, it is being devalued in terms of real wealth.

The conventional wisdom is that when faced with the threat of recession and business failure, the solution is to grow the economy so we can grow our way out of the crisis. But because the wrong diagnosis is made, namely that businesses are in trouble because access to credit has tightened, the wrong solution is proposed. Even if we could grow our way out of the crisis and delay the inevitable and painful reconciliation of virtual and real wealth, there

The Economist

OCTOBER 4TH-10TH 2008

www.economist.com

The Economist magazine should be celebrating. It has long been one of the world's most strident advocates for deregulation, for freer trade, for unleashing the invisible hand in the service of global economic growth. And this fall, the interlinked tentacles of trade and commerce delivered on that dream, with a vengeance. Banks went under. Debts went unpaid. Commodity prices plummeted. Trillions of dollars of wealth was wiped out. Pensioners lost their savings. Poorer nations were sideswiped, and the world's desperation index soared. Ah, the free market.

Does *The Economist* have any misgivings? Acknowledge any guilt? Run an "Oh Fuck" cover and adjust its theoretical dogma? Or is this kind of creative destruction just the kind of enema they were looking for?

Kono Matsu

World on the edge



Argentina.....\$7.00
Bahamas.....\$9.95
Barbados.....Bds\$16.50
Bermuda.....Bds\$ 7.00
Brazil.....R\$23.90

Canada.....C\$7.50
Chile.....Ch\$5,000
Colombia.....Col\$22,000
Costa Rica.....C\$5,700
Guyana.....GYD 1,650

Jamaica.....J\$510
Mexico.....Mex\$70
Peru.....S/.35.00
Spain.....€5.20
St. Maarten.....\$9.25

Trinidad & Tobago.....TD\$43
Turks & Caicos.....\$9.50
UK.....£3.90
USA.....US\$6.99
Venezuela.....Bs27

We have limited time to bring the economy into line with the biosphere's carrying capacity.

is the question of whether this would be a wise thing to do. Marginal costs of additional growth in rich countries, such as global warming, biodiversity loss and roadways choked with cars, now likely exceed marginal benefits of a little extra consumption. The end result is that promoting further economic growth makes us poorer, not richer. The cost of feeding and caring for the extra pigs is greater than the benefit of eating extra pork.

To keep up the illusion that growth is making us richer, we deferred costs by issuing financial assets almost without limit, conveniently forgetting that these so-called assets are, for society as a whole, debts to be paid back out of future growth of real wealth. That future growth is very doubtful, given the deferred real costs, while the debt continues to compound to absurd levels.

What allowed symbolic financial assets to become so disconnected from underlying real assets?

First, our economy is based on fiat money (paper money issued by governments) that has value by convention but isn't backed by any physical wealth. Second, our fractional reserve banking system allows pyramiding of bank money (demand deposits) on top of the fiat government-issued currency. Third, buying stocks and "derivatives" on margin allows a further pyramiding of financial assets on top of the already multiplied money supply. In addition, the financial sector was very inventive in coming up with new financial instruments that were designed to circumvent government regulation of commercial banks to protect the public interest.

The agglomerating of mortgages of differing quality into opaque and shuffled bundles that led to the sub-prime mortgage crisis should be outlawed. The US balance of trade deficit has allowed us to consume as if our economy was growing real wealth instead of accumulating debt. So far, US trading partners have been willing to lend the dollars they earned from running a trade surplus back to us by buying treasury bills but these treasury bills are liens on yet-to-exist wealth. Of course, they also buy real assets and their

future earning capacity. Our brilliant economic gurus meanwhile continue to preach deregulation of both the financial sector and of international commerce (i.e. "free trade").

How then do we clean up this mess?

A massive bailout – and having the US taxpayer take on billions in bad debt – is merely a way to keep the growth economy from failing a little longer while allowing it to continue degrading the planet. Propping up such a destructive system makes no sense. Instead, we need to redesign our laws and institutions to foster an economy that remains within biophysical limits.

I would not advocate a return to commodity money (such as gold), but would certainly advocate gradually increasing reserve requirements for banks. Commercial banks should act as financial intermediaries that lend other peoples' money, not as engines for creating money out of nothing and lending it at interest. If every dollar invested represented a dollar previously saved, we could restore the classical economists' balance between investment and abstinence. Far fewer stupid or crooked investments would be tolerated if abstinence had to precede investment.

Of course the growth economists will howl that such measures would slow the growth of GDP. I say so be it – growth has become uneconomic, and we have limited time to bring the economy into line with the biosphere's carrying capacity.

Were Soddy still around, I doubt he would be surprised by the havoc wreaked by all these two-legged Wall Street pigs, given that they were left free to raid whatever troughs they could poke their snouts into while drawing on conventional economic thinking to disguise their mess as innovations in finance. But I also think he would be disappointed that 80 years after the publication of his book, we still haven't figured out a way to tether the economy to reality – to ensure that the number of negative pigs can't grow without limit.

ELICIA DI FONZO



BIG IDEA

A Steady-State Economy

by Herman E. Daly

THE EARTH AS A WHOLE IS APPROXIMATELY IN A STEADY STATE. Neither the surface nor the mass of the earth is growing or shrinking; the inflow of radiant energy to the Earth is equal to the outflow (the greenhouse effect has slowed the outflow, but the resulting temperature increase will force it back up); and material imports from space are roughly equal to exports (both negligible). None of this means that the earth is static – a great deal of qualitative change can happen inside a steady state, and certainly has happened on Earth. The most important change in recent times has been the enormous growth of one subsystem of the Earth, namely the economy, relative to the total system, the ecosphere. This huge shift from an “empty” to a “full” world is truly “something new under the sun,” as historian J. R. McNeil calls it in his book of that title. The closer the economy approaches the scale of the whole Earth, the more it will have to conform to the physical behavior mode of the Earth. That behavior mode is a steady state – a system that permits qualitative development but not aggregate quantitative growth. Growth is more of the same stuff; development is the same amount of better stuff (or at least different stuff). The remaining natural world is no longer able to provide the sources and sinks for the metabolic throughput necessary to sustain the existing oversized economy – much less a growing one. Economists have focused too much on the economy’s circulatory system and have neglected to study its digestive tract. Throughput growth means pushing more of the same food through an ever larger digestive tract; development means eating better food and digesting it more thoroughly. Clearly the economy must conform to the rules of a steady state – seek qualitative development, but stop aggregate quantitative growth. GDP increase conflates these two very different things.

We have lived for 200 years in a growth economy. That makes it hard to imagine what a steady-state economy (SSE) would be like, even though for most of our history mankind has lived in an economy in which annual growth has been negligible. Some think an SSE would mean freezing in the dark under communist tyranny. Some say that huge improvements in technology (energy efficiency, recycling) are so easy that it will make the adjustment both profitable and fun.

costs faster than benefits since we do not bother to separate costs from benefits in our national accounts. Instead we lump them together as “activity” in the calculation of GDP.

Ecological economists have offered empirical evidence that growth is already uneconomic in high-consumption countries. Since neoclassical economists are unable to demonstrate that growth, either in throughput or GDP, is currently making us better off rather than worse off, it is blind arrogance on their

We have lived for 200 years in a growth economy. That makes it hard to imagine what a steady-state economy would be like.

Regardless of whether it will be hard or easy, we have to attempt an SSE because we cannot continue growing, and in fact so-called “economic” growth already has become uneconomic. The growth economy is failing. In other words, the quantitative expansion of the economic subsystem increases environmental and social costs faster than production benefits, making us poorer not richer, at least in high-consumption countries. Given the laws of diminishing marginal utility and increasing marginal costs, this should not have been unexpected. And even new technology sometimes makes it worse. For example, tetraethyl lead provided the benefit of reducing engine knock, but at the cost of spreading a toxic heavy metal into the biosphere; chlorofluorocarbons gave us the benefit of a nontoxic propellant and refrigerant, but at the cost of creating a hole in the ozone layer and a resulting increase in ultraviolet radiation. It is hard to know for sure that growth now increases

part to continue preaching aggregate growth as the solution to our problems. Yes, most of our problems (poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation) would be easier to solve if we were richer – that is not the issue. The issue is: Does growth in GDP any longer really make us richer? Or is it now making us poorer?

For poor countries GDP growth still increases welfare, at least if reasonably distributed. The question is, what is the best thing for rich countries to do to help poor countries? The World Bank’s answer is that the rich should continue to grow as rapidly as possible to provide markets for the poor and to accumulate capital to invest in poor countries. The steady state answer is that the rich should reduce their throughput growth to free up resources and ecological space for use by the poor, while focusing their domestic efforts on development, technical and social improvements, that can be freely shared with poor countries.

INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL MOBILITY, coupled with free trade, allows corporations to escape from national regulation in the public interest, playing one nation off against another. Since there is no global government they are, in effect, uncontrolled. The nearest thing we have to a global government (IMF-WB-WTO) has shown no interest in regulating transnational capital for the common good. Their goal is to help these corporations grow, because growth is presumed good for all – end of story. If the IMF wanted to limit international capital mobility to keep the world safe for comparative

advantage, there are several things they could do. They could promote minimum residence times for foreign investment to limit capital flight and speculation and they could propose a small tax on all foreign exchange transactions (Tobin tax). Most of all they could revive Keynes' proposal for an international multilateral clearing union that would directly penalize persistent imbalances in current account (both deficit and surplus), and thereby indirectly promote balance in the compensating capital account, reducing international capital movements.

TAXING WHAT WE WANT LESS OF (depletion and pollution), and ceasing to tax what we want more of (income, value added) would seem reasonable – as the bumper sticker puts it, “tax bads, not goods.” The shift could be revenue-neutral and gradual. Begin for example by forgoing \$x revenue from the worst

income tax we have. Simultaneously collect \$x from the best resource severance tax we could devise. Next period get rid of the second-worst income tax and substitute the second-best resource tax, etc. Such a policy would raise resource prices and induce efficiency in resource use.

KNOWLEDGE, UNLIKE THROUGHPUT, is not divided in the sharing, but multiplied. Once knowledge exists, the opportunity cost of sharing it is zero and its allocative price should be zero. International development aid should more and more take the form of freely and actively shared knowledge, along with small grants, and less and less the form of large interest-bearing loans. Sharing knowledge costs

little, does not create unrepayable debts, and it increases the productivity of the truly rival and scarce factors of production. Existing knowledge is the most important input to the production of new knowledge, and keeping it artificially scarce and expensive is perverse. Patent monopolies (aka “intellectual property rights”) should be given for fewer “inventions,” and for fewer years.

COULD AN SSE SUPPORT THE ENORMOUS superstructure of finance built around future growth expectations? Probably not, since interest rates and growth rates would be low. Investment would be mainly for replacement and qualitative improvement. There would likely be a healthy shrinkage of the enormous pyramid of debt that is precariously balanced atop the real economy, threatening to crash. Additionally, the SSE could benefit from a move away from our fractional-reserve banking system toward 100 percent reserve requirements.

One hundred percent reserves would put our money supply back under the control of the government rather than the private banking sector. Money would be a true public utility, rather than the by-product of commercial lending and borrowing in pursuit of growth. Under the existing fractional reserve system, the money supply expands during a boom and contracts during a slump, reinforcing the

cyclical tendency of the economy. The profit (seigniorage) from creating (at negligible cost) and being the first to spend new money – and receive its full exchange value – would accrue to the public rather than the private sector. The reserve requirement, something the Central Bank manipulates anyway, could be raised from current very low levels gradually to 100 percent. Commercial banks would make their income by financial intermediation (lending savers' money for them) as well as by service charges on checking accounts rather than by lending at interest money they create out of nothing. Lending only money that has actually been saved by someone re-establishes the classical balance between abstinence and investment. This extra discipline in lending and borrowing likely would prevent such debacles as the current "sub-prime mortgage" crisis. One hundred percent reserves would both stabilize the economy and slow down the Ponzi-like credit leveraging.

WHILE THESE TRANSITIONAL POLICIES will appear radical to many, it is worth remembering that, in addition to being amenable to gradual application, they are based on the conservative institutions of private property and decentralized market allocation. They simply recognize that private property loses its legitimacy if too unequally distributed, and that markets lose their legitimacy if prices do not

tell the whole truth about costs. In addition, the macro-economy becomes an absurdity if its scale is structurally required to grow beyond the biophysical limits of the Earth. And well before that radical physical limit, we are encountering the conservative economic limit in which extra costs of growth become greater than the extra benefits.

Back Away from the Tipping Point

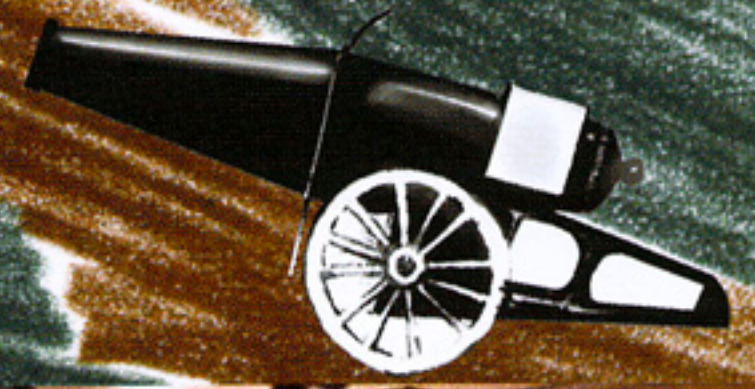
Ten crucial steps to attain an ecologically viable economic future

1. **Cap-auction-trade systems for basic resources** – Cap limits to biophysical scale according to source or sink constraint, whichever is more stringent. Auction captures scarcity rents for equitable redistribution. Trade allows efficient allocation to highest uses.
2. **Ecological tax reform** – Shift tax base from value added (labor and capital) and on to “that to which value is added,” namely the entropic throughput of resources extracted from nature (depletion), through the economy, and back to nature (pollution). Internalizes external costs as well as raises revenue more equitably. Prices the scarce but previously unpriced contribution of nature.
3. **Limit the range of inequality in income distribution** – A minimum income and a maximum income. Without aggregate growth, poverty reduction requires redistribution. Complete equality is unfair; unlimited inequality is unfair. Seek fair limits to inequality.
4. **Free up the length of the working day, week and year** – Allow greater option for leisure or personal work. Full-time external employment for all is hard to provide without growth.
5. **Re-regulate international commerce** – Move away from free trade, free capital mobility and globalization; adopt compensating tariffs to protect efficient national policies of cost internalization from standards-lowering competition from other countries.
6. **Downgrade the IMF-WB-WTO** to something like Keynes’ plan for a multilateral payments clearing union, charging penalty rates on surplus as well as deficit balances – seek balance on current account, avoid large capital transfers and foreign debts.
7. **Move to 100 percent reserve requirements** instead of fractional-reserve banking. Put control of money supply and seigniorage in hands of the government rather than private banks.
8. **Enclose the remaining commons of rival natural capital in public trusts, and price it**, while freeing from private enclosure and prices the non-rival commonwealth of knowledge and information. Stop treating the scarce as if it were non-scarce, and the non-scarce as if it were scarce.
9. **Stabilize population** – Work toward a balance in which births plus in-migrants equals deaths plus out-migrants.
10. **Reform national accounts** – Separate GDP into a cost account and a benefits account. Compare them at the margin, stop growing when marginal costs equal marginal benefits. Never add the two accounts.

This article is adapted from Towards a Steady-State Economy, a paper Herman Daly wrote for the UK Sustainable Development Commission in 2008. The complete text can be found at www.theoil drum.com.

economics

bionomics



In 2009, the neoclassical economic paradigm will finally begin to heave. Coups will erupt in universities around the world. Professors will face angry questions from disillusioned students. Manifestos will be created, circulated and signed – then pinned to professor's doors as a warning of the coming change. Teach-ins will be held, viruses will spread on YouTube and 30-second provocations will air on mainstream business news channels. The theoretical foundations of neoclassical economics will begin to shake like never before.

The neoclassical paradigm is only taught as a result of institutional lethargy, tenure and fear. But now, with ecological and financial crises looming all around us, the time is right for newly inspired students to crash this archaic system and set the profession on a new path. The post autistic movement paved the way, now we finish the job.

Adbusters will join the fray next Spring with a guide book for students tentatively subtitled: *How To Survive the Study of Economics With Your Heart And Mind Still Intact*.

www.truecosteconomics.org

True Cost Economics Manifesto

next on neoclassical prof's door

We, the Undersigned, make this accusation: that you, the teachers of neoclassical economics and the students that you graduate, have perpetuated a gigantic fraud upon the world.

You claim to work in a pure science of formula and law, but yours is a social science, with all the fragility and uncertainty that this entails. We accuse you of pretending to be what you are not.

You hide in your offices, protected by your mathematical jargon, while in the real world, forests vanish, species perish and human lives are callously destroyed. We accuse you of gross negligence in the management of our planetary household.

You have known since its inception that one of your measures of economic progress, the Gross Domestic Product, is fundamentally flawed and incomplete, and yet you have allowed it to become a global standard, reported day in day out in every form of media. We accuse you of recklessly projecting an illusion of progress.

You have done great harm, but your time is coming to its close. Your systems are crumbling, your flaws increasingly laid bare. An economic revolution has begun, as hopeful and determined as any in history. We will have our clash of economic paradigms, we will have our moment of truth, and out of each will come a new economics – open, holistic, human-scale.

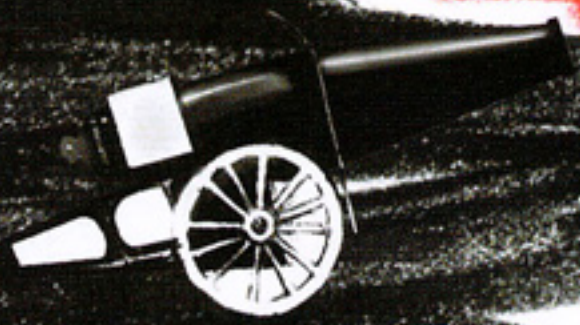
On campus after campus, we will chase you old goats out of power. Then, in the months and years that follow, we will begin the work of reprogramming your doomsday machine.

Sign the manifesto at:

TRUECOSTECONOMICS.ORG

**capitalism is the only
game in town**

**another world
is possible**





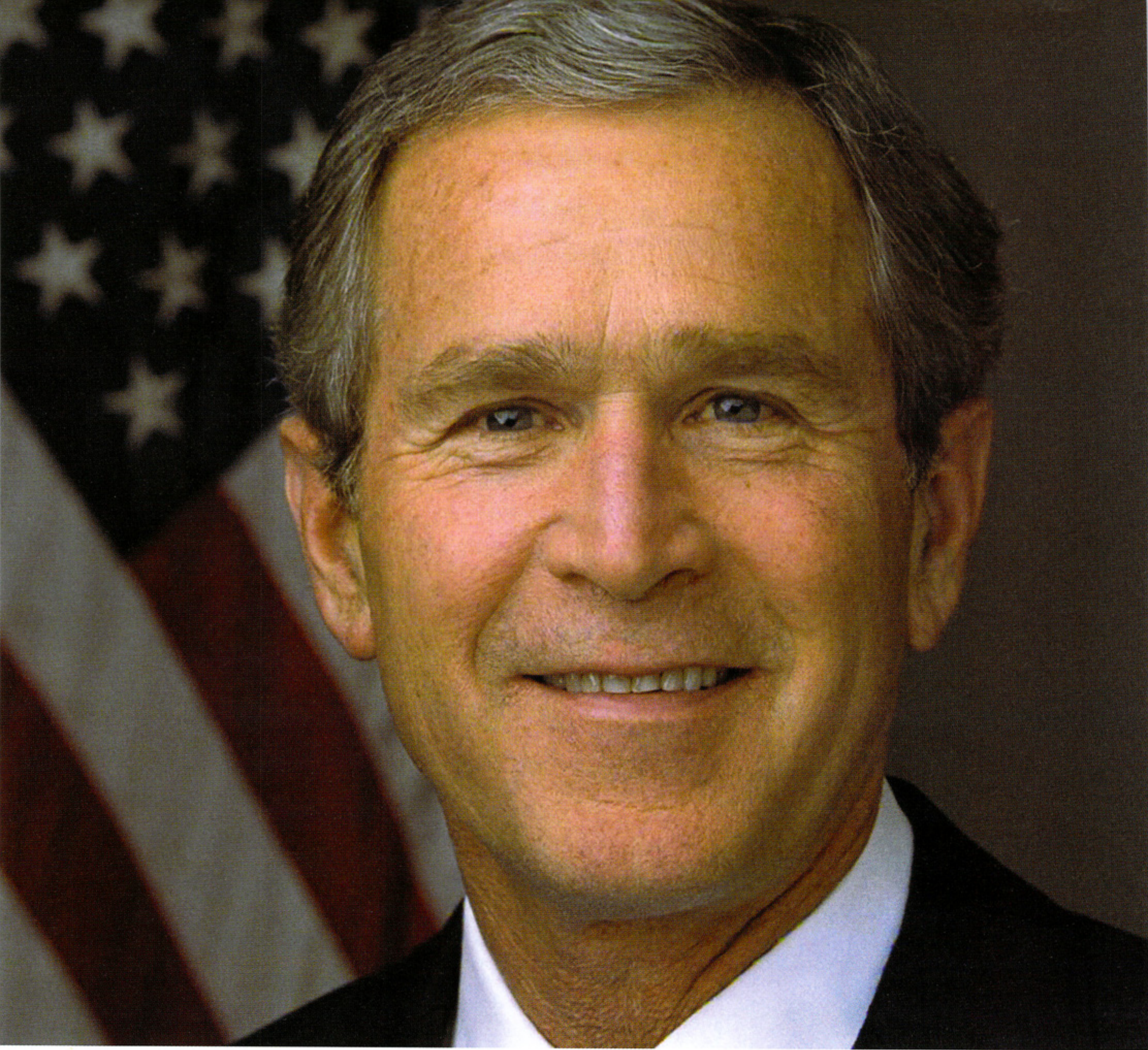
you are here



The Founding Father

“Should any American soldier be so base and infamous as to injure any [prisoner]... I do most earnestly enjoin you to bring him to such severe and exemplary punishment as the enormity of the crime may require. Should it extend to death itself, it will not be disproportional to its guilt at such a time and in such a cause... for by such conduct they bring shame, disgrace and ruin to themselves and their country.”

George Washington, charge to the Northern Expeditionary Force, September 14, 1775.



The Torture President

For a span of 225 years after George Washington so eloquently and publicly opposed the practice of torture, the United States maintained a standard of human rights that protected even the most hated of her enemies. But in his attempt to wage war on terror, the 43rd President of the United States, George Walker Bush, subverted the constitution and denied the writ of *habeas corpus* to government prisoners. President Bush vetoed a bill that sought to establish a single standard of integration for US forces. He supported the practice of waterboarding as a means of extracting information from suspected terrorists. And despite the effort of human rights groups around the world, President Bush, in an attempt to circumvent the Geneva Convention, refused to characterize this practice of simulated drowning as torture. Bush may well go down in history as the torture president.



bygones

LOOK AT ITS RECENT FOREIGN POLICY RECORD: failure in Iraq and Afghanistan, failure to eradicate Al Qaeda or to create peace in the Middle East, failure to advance global trade talks or to reconcile with Latin America – the list goes on. The present caution on interventions and democratization is motivated not by sudden enlightenment, but by the shock of failure. America is waking up to soft power and public diplomacy because hard power has failed, and no alternative remains.

Getting America's house in order won't happen on a single chilly inauguration day in January, 2009. The State Department is broken to an extent that outsiders fail to appreciate. And nobody seems to know how to restore American prestige. One would

expect hard-headed guidance based on experience, observation and connections, yet instead one hears – from ex-administration officials from the Clinton and Bush eras – the platitudes of detached utopians. Grand acronyms for new multilateral institutions are proposed – ignoring the fact that even Security Council reform has not budged in more than a decade. Massive civilian reserve corps are plotted – while Congress cuts the diplomatic budget by 10 percent. These are proposals suited either to a world that no longer exists or to a country that no longer has the will or power to carry them out.

Parag Khanna

From the Summer 2008 edition of New Perspectives Quarterly.

sting

WHEN THE DOLLAR LOSES ITS LEAD ROLE as the world's reserve currency because its trading partners are shunning the greenback, Americans will have to pay for Toyotas in yen, Chinese toys in renmimbi and Louis Vuitton in euros just like everyone else.

This trajectory sets the stage for "the battle of the Atlantic" between the euro and the dollar as America heads for relative decline. It will be very hard for America to control this flight from the dollar as it accelerates. When this happens, all those dollars out there in the world – the US has minted double what it needs for its domestic economy – will head home and stimulate the kind of hyperinflation we once associated with Brazil.

Kenichi Ohmae

From the Summer 2008 edition of New Perspectives Quarterly.

The United States today is facing the return of the native. In the American scheme of things, the Indian had disappeared from history – reluctantly, sadly, tragically, he was eliminated. He had gone into retreat in our memories.



SUDDENLY, SPILLING OUT FROM OVER OUR SOUTHERN HORIZON are people who were supposed to no longer exist.

The discomfiting thought occurs to us that history has not ended. That, instead, we are in the middle of another turn of the wheel our words can't describe. We are facing a future we can't name.

So we have decided to call these immigrants "Hispanics" in reference to the Spanish king who once ruled Mexico and the American Southwest. But most of these faces that are coming toward us are people of mixed blood – mestizos.

Clearly the imprint of the Indian is on their faces. It is on my face. The long struggle between the US and Mexico began as a fight over land in the 19th century. Mexico used to be the larger of the two countries, but lost its enormous northern lands (now the US Southwest, from Texas to New Mexico to California) when America began to expand westward.

There remains anxiety on the part of both countries about this memory. Mexicans have a sense that this is a land that ancestrally was Mexican, although there is a recognition that it is no longer. But for the US to see that land being populated again by Spanish-speaking people is to remember that extinguished part of its history.

That unsettles many Americans because they're not used to this repetition of history. They do not have a circular sense of time in which events repeat themselves, but a linear sense of history going in one direction only – into the future.

This most recent wave of immigration is likely to change not just the destiny of the US, but of Latin America as well. The "Hispanic" population in the US is now over 40 million people. That is equivalent in size to a large country in Latin America.

For those of us living in the US, a new Latin American sensibility is being born. One of the things I've seen in the huge pro-immigrant demonstrations here recently is not simply families walking together – the son walking with the father, the mother with her babies – but also Colombians walking alongside Mexicans, walking alongside Dominicans, walking alongside Guatemalans.

A new pan-Hispanic identity is being born for the first time – in the US. These people are no longer members of their ethnic or national groups; they're marching as some new nation of the Hispanic world. That is revolutionary.

At the same time, we are seeing the reunion of the hemisphere from another angle. America is discovering itself within the Americas. This is a new awareness for a country that has traditionally written its history from

east to west. Now it is populated by millions of people, here both legally and illegally, who describe the US as "El Norte." Their presence forces the country to form a new vision of itself along a north-south axis.

The immigrant experience in the US is profoundly different from that in Europe. For example, Arabs and North Africans in France confront a completed country and culture every day in the subway, on television, in a bakery, on the radio. France, like the rest of Europe, has a long-formed and finished culture that does not need them.

In the US, we have a long tradition of immigrants being the very ones who forge the American identity. There was no identity here when the first immigrants arrived – except that of the Indian faces now coming back. In this country, the immigrant, at least theoretically or mythically, has a possibility of adding to the country.

Of course, there are those in America who now say, "We are a complete nation. We don't need any more immigrants." But by and large, the idea that immigrants contribute to the formation of a work in progress still dominates the American imagination.

Truly, in America today, the past and the future are meeting each other. It is at this border of time that the US now plans to put tanks and soldiers, and there is talk of a wall.

What this obsession reveals, perhaps, is the nativist anxiety of a relatively young country that has been black and white since its founding. A future marriage to Latin Americans, literally and figuratively, means the introduction of the mestizo or mixed culture – what Jose Vasconcelos, the education minister at the time of the Mexican Revolution, called "*la raza cosmica*."

In some profound way, this transformation is subversive, freeing America from its black/white dialectic. Ultimately, what we mestizos bring to the US is a sense of impurity. After all, we are a people who violate borders. That is our gift.

Richard Rodriguez is the Mexican-American author of Hunger for Memory, Days of Obligation: An Argument With My Mexican Father and Brown: The Last Discovery of America. This article first appeared in the Spring 2006 edition of New Perspectives Quarterly.

AS A MEXICAN, I CAN RECALL COUNTLESS OCCASIONS WHEN I HAVE BEEN ANGERED BY WHAT I DEEMED STUPID QUESTIONS ABOUT MY COUNTRY:

Is it dangerous down there? Does everyone carry a gun? You can buy drugs off the policemen, right? Don't you get sick if you drink the water? The clichés seemed endless and though I mostly attributed them to ignorance and racism, I could never be sure where they really came from. I wanted to think that they were the result of Hollywood stereotypes or too much Fox News.

But for over a year now, we have awoken in Mexico to morning headlines like "12 Beheaded Bodies Found in Yucatan," "28 Men Executed Outside Mexico City," and "State Police Linked to Kidnapping." As the list goes on and on, I am forced to ask myself whether those clichés I so desperately wanted to dismiss are somehow grounded in reality. I have to wonder if we, as a nation, have become a destructive self-fulfilling prophecy. A land of violence, lawlessness and chaos.

According to the Ministry of Public Safety, the number of executions carried out by organized crime from January to September, 2008 was 3,202. Of those, 367 were tortured, 89 were decapitated, 181 had sinister messages written on or near their bodies, 352 were police officers and 20 were members of the military. Despite the horrific nature of the violence, many Mexicans took comfort in the fact that it seemed to be taking place mostly between law enforcement and the drug cartels (with the occasional stray bullet striking a civilian). That all changed at midnight on September 16, 2008. Independence Day. At a traditional celebration in the city of Morelia, Michoacán, four hand grenades exploded in a crowded square killing seven people and injuring over 100. Although it could have been an isolated incident, the attack is most likely the beginning of an escalation in violence that targets innocent civilians. There is a name for attacks on the general

population: terrorism.

Less than a decade ago, Mexico was considered the darling of Latin America. It was hailed by international analysts as a beacon of democracy, justice and modernity. But then the PRI, widely considered to be the official party, lost an election and the door opened to a new era of Mexican Democracy. The first president to serve in the new democracy, Vicente Fox, made little political progress and was accused of using his time in office mainly to assist his family in amassing an inexplicably large fortune. When Fox's term ended in 2006, leftwing PRD candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador was widely expected to win the presidential election, but it was Felipe Calderón, a member of Fox's rightwing PAN party, that was awarded the presidency by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal after election results (with less than a 1 percent difference between the candidates) were questioned by the PRD. It is worth noting that the Tribunal acknowledged interference by President Fox as well as irregularities in the electoral process but declared these infringements "intangibles" and refused a recount.

This incident left the country deeply divided. On one side are those who accept the legitimacy of Calderón's rule and on the other are those who consider López Obrador the legitimate President. This division represents the key to understanding Mexico today.



ILUSTRACION DE DIEGO RIVERA EXCLUSIVA PARA SIEMPRE!

After the election was settled by the courts, the Lopez Obradoristas began a series of acts of civil disobedience, including a massive campout in downtown Mexico City. Tens of thousands of people slept on Reforma Avenue every night for six weeks. Rather than rallying in support of the cause, Mexico City's middle and upper class complained about the traffic problems and street closures caused by the protest. The media began to cast the protestors as criminals – agitators who were impeding progress and peace. One famous radio personality said that she wouldn't mind the campouts if only the protestors weren't so ugly and foul-smelling. Her heinous comment bears repeating only because it reveals a deep-seated prejudice based on class and race in Mexico.

On one hand, there is an affluent, mostly white upper class who make up the base of the PAN party and don't want to see much about the country change. On the other hand, there is the lower class, a mostly dark-skinned mass of more than 80 million people. Barely literate and constantly struggling to survive, these are the people who work as the maids, cooks and drivers of the upper class. López Obrador was their great hope – a champion of the working class. When he lost the election by such a narrow and questionable margin, Mexican society became irreparably fractured.

On a political plane, the Congress and Senate are divided in such a way that no party has a majority vote and no important legislation can be passed without two of the three major parties forming an alliance – a political feat not easily accomplished.

Mayors and governors from the PRD have refused to acknowledge Calderón as the legitimate president, which means that they have trouble getting federal funding and there is little cooperation between the different levels of government.

When Calderón took office in December 2006, he announced three main projects: Fiscal Reform, Energy Reform and the War on Drugs. After months of battling to obtain support from the parliamentary houses, a diminished version of Fiscal Reform was passed, which translated into the middle income bracket paying more taxes than ever before. Energy Reform is really a euphemism for the privatization of state-owned oil company PEMEX. Members of the PRD, as well as many citizens, fear that this would mean yet another loss of wealth for the country, with profits from extraction and refinery going to private pockets instead of the common good. So far this privatization has been avoided, since the PRD legislators have not allowed the federal government's proposal to make it to the voting floor, prompting the mainstream media and a large portion of society to accuse them of “kidnapping” the Congress. They tried to make this process

more democratic and organized “citizen consultations” in the cities where they hold power. Over 90 percent of voters were against the Energy Reform, but the federal government declared that asking citizens for their opinion was unconstitutional.

Calderón's final project, the War on Drugs, is directly related to the current surge of violence. He declared at the beginning of his term that the activities of drug cartels would no longer be tolerated and he would use all branches of the military to carry out this enormous task. It has been a long-standing rumor that every Mexican president has negotiated with the leaders of the drug trade, allowing them to maintain their business if they agree to keep violence to a minimum. This corrupt bargain has trickled through every local government and law enforcement agency down to local cops, whose loyalty can easily be bought. But once Calderón broke this unwritten pact, heads began to (literally) roll.

Fighting the cartels is a noble endeavor, but I fear that the war can't be won. Mexican law enforcement is shockingly inefficient. Agencies often fail to cooperate with one another and tend to act on tips rather than intelligence. Corruption represents an even larger obstacle than inefficiency. Thousands of soldiers defect from the military every year, many headed to the cartels to find more profitable employment. In nearly every drug bust, a member of the police force or military is found to be involved. This fact is not surprising, given that police salaries can be as little as \$300 per month. Also, impunity for drug crimes is rampant. Out of 40,000 people arrested for drug related crimes over a two-year period, only 269 received jail time. The judicial system, like nearly everything else, is corrupt and the chances of being punished for crimes are almost non-existent.

In addition to drug related crimes, kidnapping is also on the rise. Over 1400 cases were reported in 2006 and the first half of 2007. However, it's estimated that most kidnappings are not reported for fear that the authorities may be behind them. In June 2007, the 14-year-old son of a prominent businessman was kidnapped (at a staged police checkpoint) on his way to school and eventually found dead in the trunk of a car. This incident ignited public outrage, and for the first time in years, the upper class mobilized peaceful protests. The government signed a National Security Pact in response to petitions, in which they basically committed to comply with responsibilities they already have. In the first 22 days after the Pact was signed, 438 people were executed, decimating hopes that this pact would be the answer.

Why are there so many criminals in Mexico, and why are they winning? There are certain economic factors which cannot be ignored. Millions of young men whose families had been dedicated to agriculture for generations have lost their land to real estate and industrial developments. They are faced with the choice of either getting minimum wage jobs, like working at Wal-Mart – which will not allow them to support their families – emigrating illegally to the United States, or getting involved in criminal activities: the drug business, kidnapping or robbery. The latter pay more, and unfortunately, the moral compass for thousands of people seems to be broken. Social resentment plays a role as well. Mexico's nine richest billionaires have fortunes that add up to 8.6 percent of the country's GDP. This kind of disparity creates a powerful delusion that it is not wrong to take from those who have so much when others have so little.

The outlook for 2009 is not bright. The worst-case scenario is that violence will continue to intensify and include terrorist attacks, leaving both the government and private citizens powerless against organized crime. The best-case scenario is that we might react as a country in a way that strives to understand where the source of the current problems so that we may attack them at their roots. The next time somebody asks me if Mexico is a dangerous place where people shoot each other over disagreements and the authorities are corrupt, I will have to answer, with great sadness, yes.

Mónica López was born in Mexico City, where she obtained a degree in International Relations from the famously neoliberal Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM). After three years helping Fortune 500 companies cut costs and streamline operations as a Senior Business Analyst at management consulting firm A. T. Kearney, she decided to embark on a career with more social value. She has since worked as a writer, translator and editor for several publications. She now lives in Guadalajara and is the Editor-in-Chief of México Design magazine.



YOSHINORI KON
ZOMBIE ALONE



All year, it appeared to be business as usual on Japanese bookstands: Get-rich-quick guides peddled by the celebrity guru of the moment; economic tomes by wizened doomsayers; salacious confessions of housewives-turned-whores.

But if you browsed a moment longer, you'd find something very substantial amid the stacks of pap: A bleak, searing novel of proletarian despair, written almost 80 years ago, and suddenly outselling the sensational and the self-help.

by Roland Kelts and Leo Lewis

Young Japanese employees are finding parallels between their lives in 2008 and some of the darkest days in the nation's pockmarked political history. Corporate employers are losing their reputation as kindly upholders of Japan's social contract. The ideology – if not the activity – of activism may be coming back, after long, languorous decades in hibernation. And leftist books are being read again. Voraciously.

Tectonic shifts are taking place beneath the polished veneer of Japanese society, and the domestic population is sensing the coming cataclysm – even as it realizes that it has few, if any, response plans.

A single random stabbing attack on a crowd of people, like Tomohiro Kato's rampage in downtown Tokyo this summer, may be written off as an act of individual lunacy or psychosis. But such outbursts become much harder to rationalize when there is a steady succession of them. High suicide rates have long been considered par for the course in a country where religion and culture make no taboo of the act – but the sharp rise among 30-year-olds this past year has become impossible to ignore.

The mistake – both by the foreign observer and Japan's own corporate-governmental complex – has been to view young Japanese as *heiwaboke* (peace-

addled) and indefinitely ovine, prone to conformity. More sensible is to think of the Japanese as long-term addicts of a narcotic malaise: politically malnourished and listless, and prone instead to bursts of unfettered hilarity, or rage.

Will a new 21st-century version of socialism be their rehab? In a land where grass-roots politics have been stunted or allowed to straggle, will left-wing sentiment and activity motivate young Japanese to organize? And are the 10,000-plus Japanese who have joined the Communist Party since January a forgettable anomaly or a valuable trend?

Are increasing instances of violence and random killings merely the dispersed, unharnessed expressions of an ideological energy longing to be given proper direction?

For the moment at least, the intellectual side of the phenomenon is

about an overlooked novel called *Kanikosen* (*The Crab-Canning Ship*) published in 1929 and arguably the most powerful work of author Takaji Kobayashi. Appearing shortly before the young writer was hunted down and tortured to death by Japan's terrifying *Tokubetsu Koutou Keisatsu*, or secret police (think the KGB with longer, sharper teeth), the novel describes life aboard a factory ship for its crew of seasonally-hired workers.

But something else – far darker and unsettling – is happening across Japanese society: it is slowly and painfully realising that it has a problem.

Kanikosen has been in print since the 1930s, but until last January, its combined sales amounted to around 1.5 million. This year alone, nearly half a million new copies have been printed and are selling out across the nation – apparently igniting the closet communism of Japan’s stereotypically lemming-like conformist commuters. Two different *manga* versions of the novel have also been published to bring its savage themes to younger audiences, making them bite-sized for the new Bolsheviks. Around 200,000 copies of the *manga* have moved from the shelves thus far.

The story was written in the depths of Japan’s bleakest ultra-nationalist hour. Workers lived in fear of their bosses, and everyone lived in fear of the secret police. Unionism was tantamount to communism, which used to be far too subversive for Japanese comfort.

The novel’s main characters are young and desperate for work. They take jobs on the *Kanikosen*, which fished for crabs along the freezing coast of Hokkaido, Japan’s northernmost island, and in whose stinking hulls hundreds toiled at shelling and canning the catch.

New at the time, the factory ship stood for many things: modernity at the expense of humanity, the subjugation of man to company, and the crude association of suffering with progress. Modern Japanese readers are discovering, to their fascination and chagrin, just how well these themes have aged.

Constantly hungry and abysmally paid, the men in *Kanikosen* live under the continuous threat of violence and sexual abuse from a gang of thugs hired by the crabmeat company to keep the laborers working. Redemption comes only at the end, when the crab-cannery realize that only by standing together can they resist their violent bosses and the faceless corporate owner of the ship.

Still, their victory is short-lived and entirely hollow. The workers’ brief revolution dies miserably, and the giant ship rolls on.

In the 21st century, *Kanikosen* has traversed the walls of ill-attended Japanese campuses and landed in the mainstream media. The book has pinched a nerve in what is an increasingly disoriented culture, one that Kiyohiko Ikeda, a biologist at Waseda University, calls

“restrictive to the point where outbursts are inevitable.”

On their daily rail commutes to work or in stolen minutes on lunch breaks, Japan’s workers are suddenly reading about and discussing hardship again. A second, related book was recently published, cataloguing the comments of dozens of Japanese readers for whom the original novel has been an incendiary text.

“Of course I have never been on a ship like this,” wrote one woman who worked as a temp for ten years, “but I could actually smell its stench. I know exactly the dissatisfactions they are talking about. Those people on the ship are my brothers.”

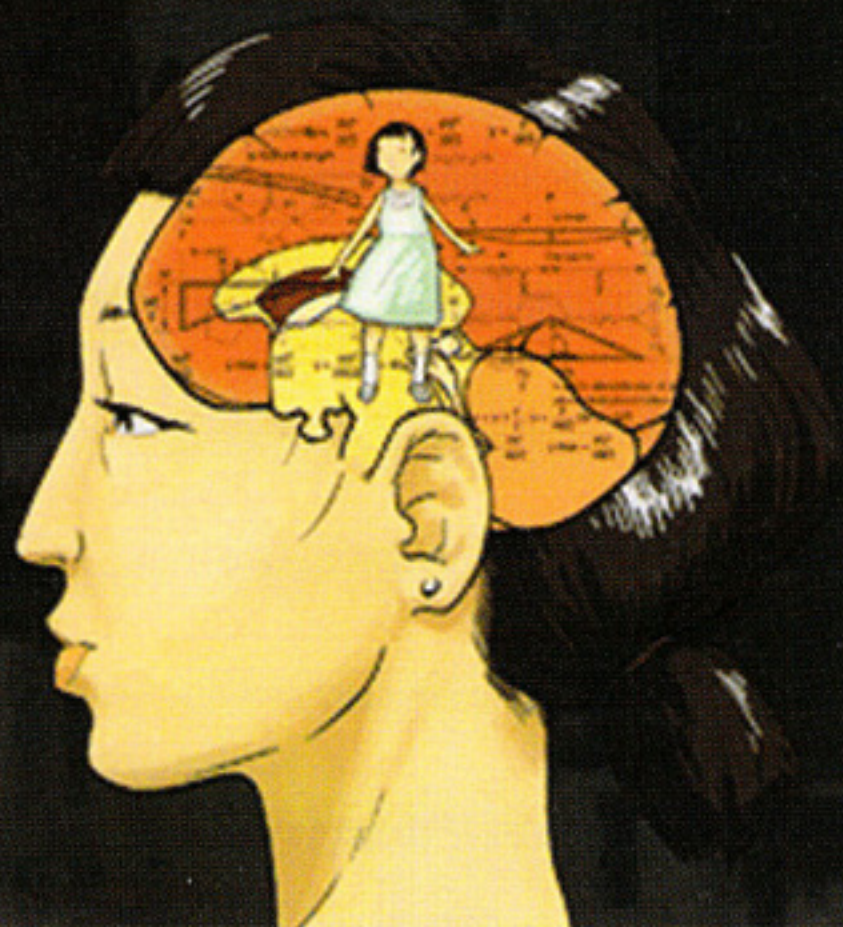
Adding to the anxiety of Japan’s corporate barons, unhappy ranks of white-collar worker bees and despondent young temps are treating *Kanikosen* as an unambiguous revolutionary parable for the modern Japanese workplace: the insanely long hours, derisory pay and vicious institutional bullying aboard the *Kanikosen* seem grimly familiar – and possibly good rationale to unionize.

More and more part-timers, barred from joining the anemic official unions of the companies where they work, have begun forming their own enclaves. There is even one at Toyota, Japan’s über-corporation. And these newer unions are angry enough to point out the many flaws in what workers have for decades been dulled into believing is normal.

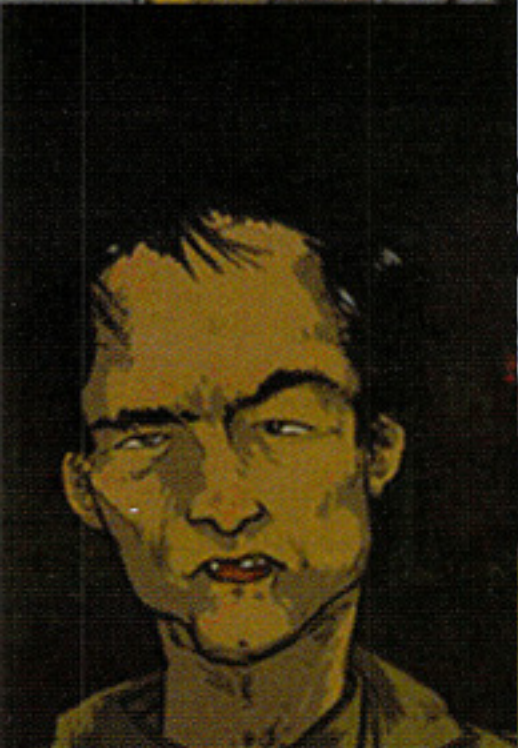
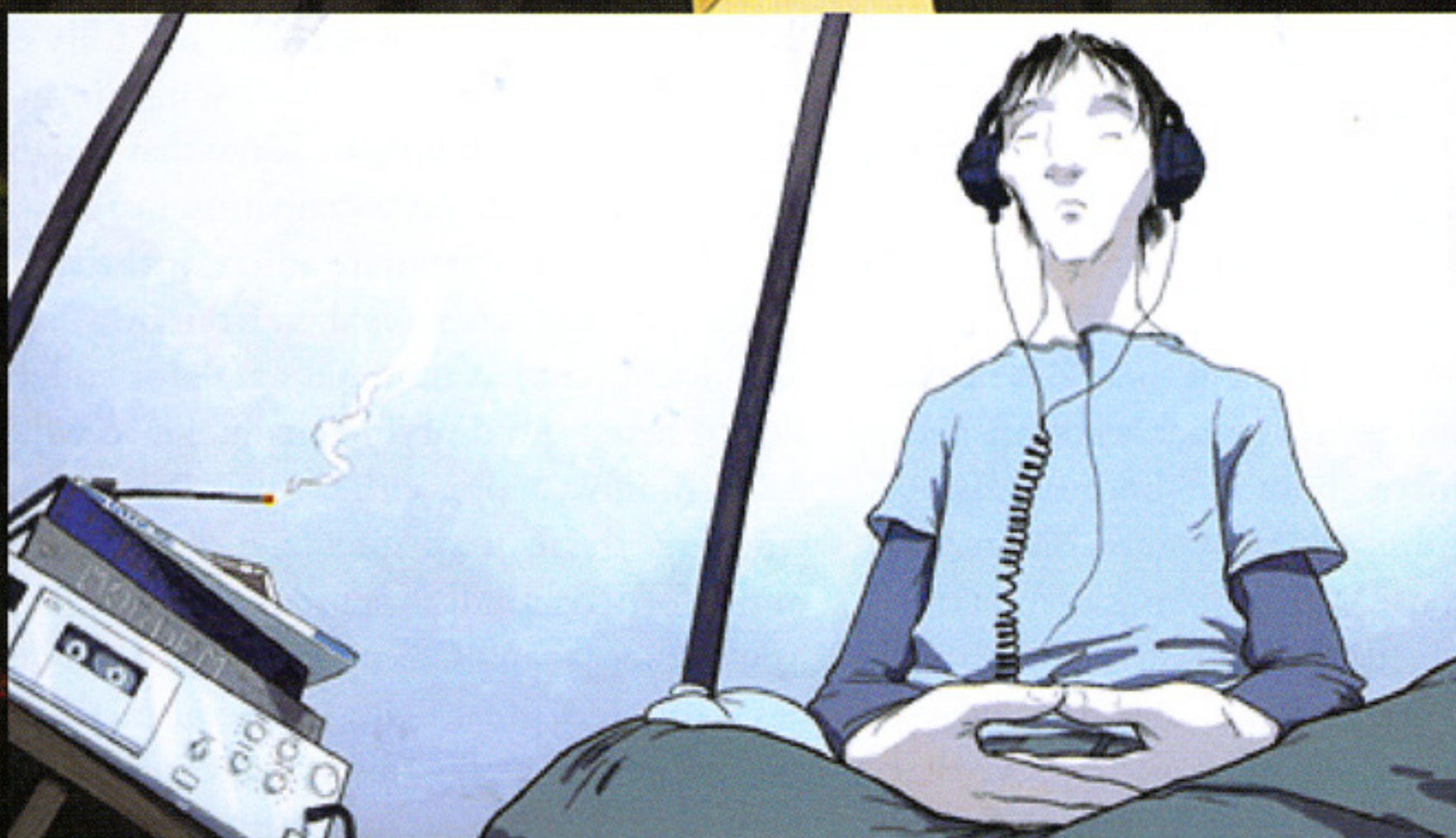
Japan is, after all, a country where death by overwork has both a proper name – *karoshi* – and legal recognition, as does ostracism within a company. As does the demotion of white-collar staff to meaningless manual labor designed to punish lack of loyalty.

Many Japanese remember with a shudder Hiroaki Kushioka, the accountant-turned-whistleblower forced to spend more than 30 years tending the weeds in the company parking lot after bringing a major price-fixing scandal to light.

In recent decades, while Japan Inc, the corporate-governmental alliance, could still get away with the pretense that it was delivering collective prosperity to the nation, scathing public criticism of companies has been muted. Unions were weak and almost comically acquiescent.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEFF PRIEST



But now, as the economic chasm widens between rich and poor, the revolutionary flavor of Kobayashi's socialist tract is appealing to the nominally capitalist masses.

Karin Amamiya, a former punk rocker-turned-writer and social commentator engaged in a recent public debate on *Kanikosen* and described the book as the "bible for freeters (freelance part-time workers) and their vicious struggle."

The bookstores themselves are making little secret of the novel's new appeal. When *Kanikosen* was reprinted earlier this year, Tokyo's largest bookshop put a poster at the front of the store reading: "Revival of the book that describes the cruel labor environment of the past: an environment similar to that of the current working poor in 2008."

Japan is fad-friendly, of course, and there have been plenty of domestic commentators quick to dismiss the novel's popularity as a mere "boomu" (boom). Like *tamagotchi* digital pets and super-loose socks on school-girls, say the jaded veterans, the rumblings of literary socialism will be short-lived, and will ultimately have little effect beyond the enrichment of a few publishers.

And yet there are many others who also believe that the surprising sales of *Kanikosen* suggest a more fundamental shift in public thought. The resurrection of the novel and its popularity with modern readers has no parallel in Japanese literary history.

One senior officer in the National Confederation of Trades Unions firmly believes the phenomenon may precede a wider swing to the left." The situation of those laborers in the book is very similar to that of modern temporary workers: unpredictable contracts, working under heavy supervision, violence from supervisors, widespread sexual harassment and pressure against unionization – these are all things that the modern Japanese recognize every working day."

Another believer in the book's revival is Daisuke Asao, the managing editor of the bi-yearly magazine *Rosujene* (*Lost Generation*). Steady sales of his fiercely socialist journal, he says, attest to the resonance of so many of its stories – think pieces on the nature and philosophy of Japan's corporate *gulag* and on the

increasingly troubling pathology of its inmates.

True, a broad-based socialist movement with trouble on the shop floors and campuses may not immediately be in the cards for Japan, admits Asao, but at the same time, ordinary Japanese are starting to question the values and direction of their capitalist-oriented society.

In rioting and civil disobedience, Japan remains a long way from its feisty past. But it's equally true that the nation's much-heralded love of everything cute – the colorful harmlessness of its youth culture and those famously crime-free streets – has not fully eradicated an awareness of history. Left wing rioting in Japan has a proud and credible ancestry that began when the United States ended its occupation in 1952 and did not die out until the corporate edicts of the 1970s.

What clearly separates then from now is that the current discontent has minimal scope for collective expression. There is no unifying channel into which all the pain can flow, so it is either turned inwards on the individual, in the form of suicide, or haphazardly outwards in the form of random stabbings.

Whether Japan's Communist Party can be that channel is moot. A great many of the more than 10,000 who have joined the party this year are in their 20s and 30s. They read *Kanikosen*, said Toshio Ueki, the party's chief spokesman, because they "can identify with the inhumanity and are just as unable to imagine a tomorrow. We expect to expand our rolls to 20,000 next year."

Plenty of the new members joined after the Communist Party chairman made a speech in the National Diet declaring that Japan's young people would have no future if matters remained as they are. His speech was then relayed globally via YouTube.

Rather than scoffing at the claim or dismissing it with glib assurances, then Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda replied that Japan's situation "had never been good in the middle to long-term."

Japanese capitalism – that ostensibly special "third way" version of capitalism, which has so consistently defied and irritated the United States – is less straightforwardly acceptable to its local drones than it used to be.

"The patience of a public that has been so quiet and

Plenty of young Japanese regularly declare, that they are "tired of life".

content for so long has finally run out," says Asao, "there are many little bubbles of dissatisfaction in Japan at the moment."

As they endure the nightly mundanity of the convenience store or the daytime lobotomy of waving red sticks at traffic jams, the *freeter* part-timers know that *Kanikosen* is a novel aimed at them. But the full-time, white-collar "salarymen" think it is all theirs, too: the novel describes cruelty, exploitation and imprisonment, all of which echoes the sense of padded slavery felt so keenly in Japan's white-collar ranks. And women, whose relationship with the Japanese workplace has been a long, largely unrewarded struggle for equality and respect, empathize deeply with the below-decks repression of the crab-canning ship.

Still, it is undoubtedly among the young, Asao's "lost generation," now aged between 20 and 35, that the connections are the sharpest.

Rika Kayama, a psychiatrist who specializes in analyzing the slew of pathologies that have emerged in Japanese society in recent years believes that the crisis lies in a direct friction between the relentless demands of capitalism and a sense of expectation and responsibility in society and employers instilled in the Japanese from an early age. As those expectations are repeatedly suborned to industrial reality, and young hopes are dashed, the reaction has become more extreme: "The majority of young people who have suffered from low wages and hard labor blame themselves because modern

society appears to promote self-responsibility and justifies temporary jobs," she says.

The economic forces behind the despair of young Japanese are highly toxic. Many, when interviewed on the subject, make reference to the quite spectacular mountain of public debt amassed by Japan over the years. Amounting to some 160 per cent of gross domestic product, that money has effectively been borrowed by the two postwar generations from the one hitting its mid-20s today. The money, notoriously, was used to finance the illusion that Japan's third-way version of capitalism equitably distributed national wealth around the country in a way that US capitalism visibly could not.

Massive public works projects ensured that jobs were not lost. Vast, flabby bureaucracies employed millions as worthless paper-shufflers. Monstrous lies were floated so that bridges and tunnels might connect places that nobody really needed to traverse. Everything was done for the benefit of only two generations of Japanese.

Young Japanese feel they cannot afford to leave home, so they continue to live with and off their parents as so-called "parasite singles." They feel they cannot afford to raise families, so they do not. They feel they can afford no gambling with their precious savings, so they run screaming from risk.

Japan's socio-economic dysfunction has hit them hardest. As Masahiro Yamada, a professor of family psychology at Chuo University who originally coined the term "parasite single," notes: "Economic disparity

in Japan has had a direct influence on Japanese youth. Low-paid, unskilled work goes to the youth of Japan who should be training for higher-skilled jobs because the government still limits the influx of unskilled foreign workers. And those young people, particularly the part-timers, cannot secure a stable income and find it difficult to get married. On the other side of the coin, young women who want to become homemakers cannot find husbands.

"The economic gap itself is not the issue here: what is serious is the social problems it causes and the way it is multiplying the sources of social instability. The government and companies need to work hard on giving young people some sense of hope."

While there is clearly more to the crisis than pure economics, Japan has allowed the problem to be rather strikingly under-analyzed. Phenomena like *hikikomori* – the "shutaway" youngsters who cower for months or years in their bedrooms – are treated as curios, rather than emergencies. Suicide rates above 30,000 per year never earn more than a perfunctory official declaration that something must be done. Millions of young Japanese share their thoughts and despair on thousands of blogs, chat-rooms and message boards every day. Japanese is the most blogged language in the world. If the authorities ever bothered to read any of them, they would find the content profoundly disturbing at best or cause for panic.

The phenomenon of the Japanese *otaku*, the cultish obsessives whose lives revolve around *manga* or robots or plastic models of busty maids, has also been written-off as politically irrelevant. But if *otakudom* were viewed as a religion (and in terms of form and impact on the individual, there are plenty of strong arguments for doing so), more notice might be paid to its devotees – the fundamentalism, the spiritual void their obsessions are filling, and the community-building function it performs.

And, if devotion to improbably-breasted cartoon schoolgirls, bullet-train timetables or cyborg assassins is filling the gap vacated by religion, are individual explosions of violence filling the gap left by vacuous politics?

After Kato's murderous spree in Akihabara, some believe the answer may be "yes."

When Kato finally snapped and recorded the seven-hour countdown to the bloodbath on his blog, his rants

merely joined a million other howls of anguish and dejection floating through Japanese cyberspace.

What is obvious, says one of Japan's most famous observers, Tsukasa Yoshida, is that the energy of discontent is visibly looking for direction. When confronted with adversity, Kato did not simply "do the Japanese thing" and quietly take his own life.

"From everything that Kato said about not caring who he killed, I think that the borderline between suicide and murder is becoming more blurred. Young people are converting a form of suicidal energy into an outward-facing impulse, and the target is anyone but themselves."

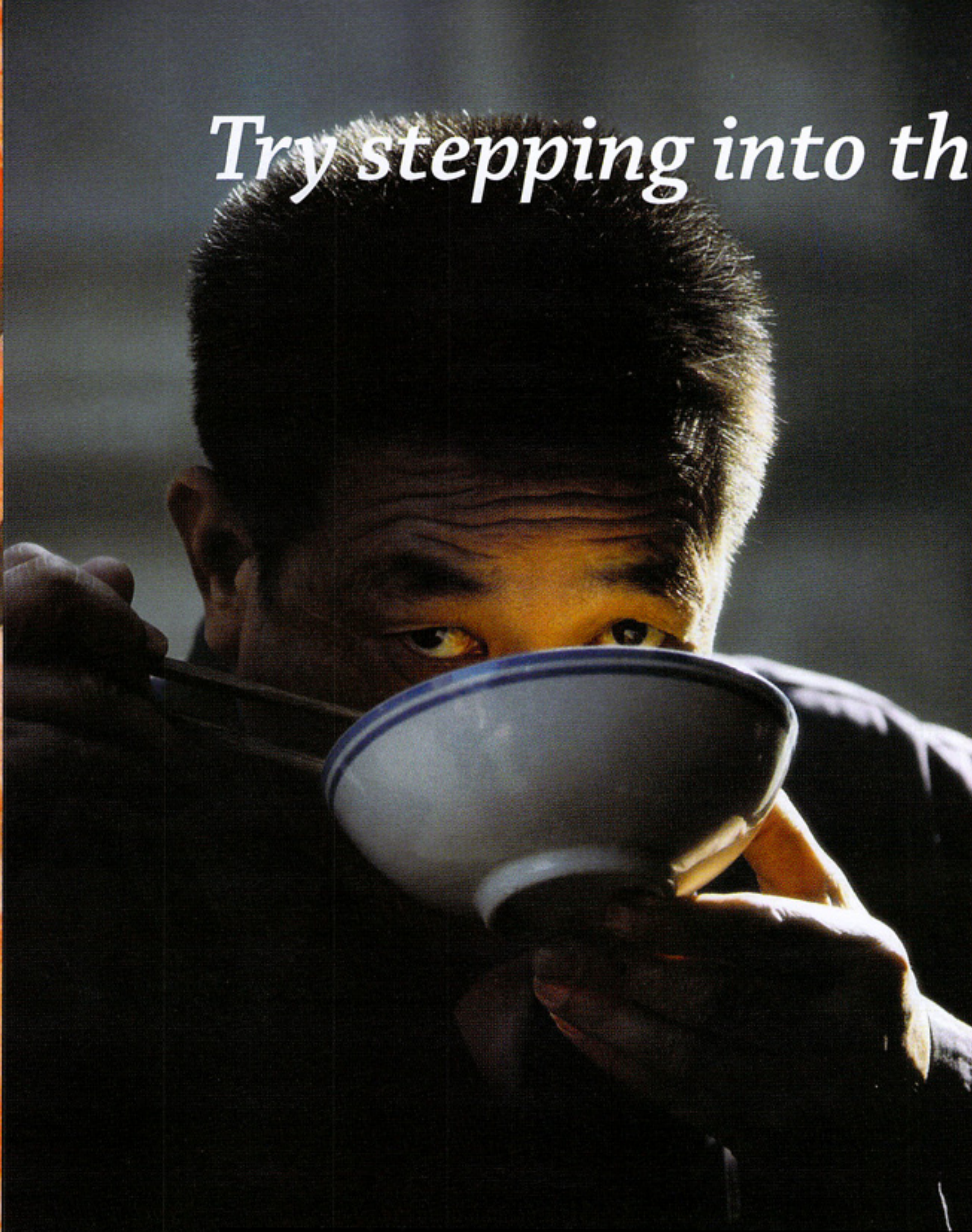
Japan is now on its fourth Prime Minister in four years – Taro Aso. But Aso is the least popular Prime Minister to enter office since World War II.

As I write, Japan may finally be rejecting its dependence upon America. And with the global economy teetering on collapse and Japan's own politics in turmoil, the country may be finding a new path, one devoid of the inequities of *Kanikosen* and alive to the possibilities of a socialist future. In short, Japan may finally become, in spite of itself, "No. 1."

Roland Kelts is the author of Japanamerica: How Japanese Pop Culture has Invaded the U.S. (www.japanamericabook.com). He is a columnist for Japan's Daily Yomiuri newspaper, a contributing editor for A Public Space and a professor at the University of Tokyo and Sophia University in Japan. He is the co-director of a new anime lecture and screening series, Anime Masterpieces (http://animemasterpieces.com/), launching in the US, Canada and Japan in 2009. His forthcoming novel is called Access.

Leo Lewis is the Asia Business Correspondent for The Times of London. He has worked for the Liverpool Echo and the Independent on Sunday newspapers and written for numerous magazines, including The Economist, Edge and GQ.

Try stepping into the Chinese mind



The Western tale on Tibet is a simple black-and-white moralistic one. They're only trying to protect the human rights of innocent Tibetans who have recently lost their independence to the oppressive Communist government of China. Hence, the cry "Free Tibet" has a lot of resonance in the West.

But try stepping into the Chinese mindset. Chinese history has records that show China's dominion over Tibet goes as far back as the 13th century. Chinese control has ebbed and flowed over the centuries, but this is equally true of many other parts of China. Central control by the capital has never been consistent, and this mirrors the inconsistency of Chinese rule over Tibet. However, China has been in control of most of its territories longer than the West has.

More importantly, the Chinese vividly recall that the latest efforts to separate Tibet from China came as recently as the

1940s and 1950s when the British and CIA agents were seen to be encouraging Tibetan independence when China was still weak. The Chinese have powerful memories of British perfidy, having once been forced by the British to accept opium as payment for Chinese tea. The Opium War – when the British also seized Hong Kong – is a distant or forgotten memory in Western minds. This humiliating chapter in Chinese history remains a fresh wound in the Chinese psyche, so when the West is seen to be trying to detach Chinese territory again, it's perceived to be rubbing salt into this fresh wound. Virtually no Chinese believe that the Western governments are only pursuing a moral course in helping Tibetans. They are convinced that these are only the latest efforts to dismember or derail China.

Kishore Mahbubani

From the Summer 2008 edition of New Perspectives Quarterly.

LEONG KA TAI
BEIJING MORNING

Almost unnoticed, Israel and the White House signed a deal...

over the summer to station an early-warning missile radar system, staffed with US military personnel, in Israel's Negev desert. The media here described the Joint Tactical Ground Station, which brings Israel under the US protective umbrella against missile attack, as a "parting gift" from President Bush as he prepared to leave office.

The siting of what is likely to become America's first permanent base on Israeli soil was apparently not easily agreed by local defense officials. Aware of the country's vulnerability to missile strikes, they have been trying to develop their own defenses – so far without success – against the varying threats posed by Palestinian Qassam rockets, Hizbullah's Katyushas, and Iran and Syria's more sophisticated arsenal.

In finally accepting that it must rely on the US shield, Israel may have answered the Middle East's biggest question of 2008: will it launch a go-it-alone strike against Iran's presumed nuclear weapons program?

The local media reported that the early-warning station would limit Israel's freedom to attack Iran since it would be the prime target for a retaliatory strike, endangering the lives of US personnel. Or as the Haaretz newspaper noted, Israeli officials viewed the radar system "as a signal of Washington's opposition to an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear program".

Although ostensibly the warm relations between Israel and the US are unchanged, in reality recent events are forcing a reluctant Israel to submit to the increasingly smothering embrace of Washington.

Tel Aviv has long seen itself as a military ally of the US, largely sharing and assisting in the realization of Washington's strategic objectives. But it has also prized a degree of independence, especially the right to pursue its own agenda in the Middle East.

For some time, the key point of difference between the two has been over the benefits of "stability." US planners have promoted regional calm as a way of maintaining American control over the flow of oil. In practice, this has meant keeping the Arab peoples, and Arab nationalism, in check by bolstering reliable dictators.

In contrast, Israel has preferred instability, believing that weak and fractious neighbours can be more easily

manipulated. A series of invasions of Lebanon to accentuate ethnic divisions there and the fueling of civil war in the occupied Palestinian territories have been the template for Israel's wider regional vision.

The implicit tension in the Israeli-US alliance surfaced with the ascendance under President George

W. Bush of the neocons, who argued that Washington's agenda should be synonymous with Israel's. The US occupation and dismemberment of Iraq was the apotheosis of the White House's application of the Israeli doctrine.

The neocons' partial fall from grace began with Israel's failure to crush Hizbullah in Lebanon more than two years ago. All the evidence suggests that both Israel and the neocons regarded Hizbullah's defeat as the necessary prelude to a US attack on Tehran. Israel's loss of nerve during the month-long war – attributed by critics like the former defense minister, Moshe Arens, to the general softening and feminisation of Israeli society – proved the country's once-celebrated martial talents were on the decline.

In the war's immediate wake, there was much discussion in Israel about how such a high-profile failure might damage the country's standing in the eyes of its US sponsor. Penance arrived in the form of the exculpations of the Winograd post-mortem – and with it the inevitable undoing of Ehud Olmert as prime minister. Washington's stables, meanwhile, were cleaned out less ostentatiously.

But where does this leave Israel?

Certainly not friendless in Washington, as cheerleaders like AIPAC and the fawning of US presidential candidates amply demonstrate. But the relationship is changing: it looks increasingly as though Israel is turning from US ally to protectorate.

The consequences are already visible in the buckling of Israel's commitment to launch a unilateral attack on Iran. Months of bellicose talk have been mostly stilled. A few believe this is the quiet before the storm of a joint US and Israeli strike. More likely it is the sign of an Israeli-fueled war agenda running out of steam.

Washington, already overstretched in the Middle East and facing concerted opposition to its policies from China and Russia, seems resigned to living with an Iranian nuclear bomb. In the new climate that means Israel will have to accept that it is no longer the only bully on the Middle East block. Israel is on the verge of its very own regional Cold War.

As in the earlier Cold War, this one will be played out through alliances and proxies. But there the similarity ends. Iran is emerging as a regional superpower, quickly developing



the financial and military clout to sponsor other actors in the region, most obviously Hamas and Hizbullah. Israel, on the other hand, is losing ground – quite literally, as the radar base reveals. It can no longer impose its own agenda or build alliances on its own terms. Its strength is becoming increasingly, and transparently, dependent on US approval.

The most immediate and tangible effects will be felt by the Palestinians, though their plight is not likely to let up any time soon. Just as before, Israel needs a long-term solution to the Palestinian problem, but cannot concede on the creation of a viable Palestinian state. Now, however, it no longer has the luxury of biding its time as it dispossesses the Palestinians. It needs to find a solution before an Iranian bomb – and an ever-more confident Hamas and Hizbullah – force a settlement on Palestine not to its liking.

Israel is therefore engaging in a frenzy of West Bank settlement building – up six times on a year ago – not seen since Oslo. It only appears paradoxical that, just as Israel's leadership is intoning the end of a Greater Israel, the most influential and optimistic supporters of a two-state solution on both sides – including Sari Nusseibeh and Shlomo Ben Ami – have been reading the last rites of Palestinian statehood.

This disillusionment, it might be expected, would provoke a new resolution towards a one-state solution among Israeli and Palestinian peace activists. Nothing could be further from the truth. Even the Palestinian leadership's growing threats that it might adopt a one-state campaign are little more than that: blackmail designed to galvanize Israeli public opinion behind two states.

Instead of a fledgling state, however, Israel is creating a series of holding pens for the Palestinians – or “warehouses,” as the Israeli peace activist Jeff Halper has referred to them – on the last vestiges of the occupied territories. For Halper, warehousing means

containing the Palestinians at minimal economic and political cost to Israel as it steals more territory.

But is the warehousing of the Palestinians intended by Israel to be the equivalent of storing unwanted books? Or, to continue this disturbing metaphor, are the Palestinians being warehoused so that at a later date they can be given away – or, worse still, pulped?

The answer again suggests Israel's growing dependence on the US. Washington has for some time been strong-arming the Sunni Arab world, especially loyal regimes like Egypt and Jordan, against Shia Iran. With its back to the wall, Israel appears willing to use this leverage to its own advantage.

Its leaders are increasingly thinking of “peace” terms that, passing over the heads of the Palestinians, will be directed at their neighbours in Jordan and Egypt. A regional solution requires a further entrenchment of

the physical and political divisions between the two “halves” of the occupied territories, with control over the Palestinian parts of the West Bank handed to Jordan and Gaza to Egypt.

It is a sign of the terminal loss of faith in their lead-

ers and Israeli good faith that the latest poll of Palestinians shows 42 percent want their government-in-waiting, the Palestinian Authority, dismantled. More than a quarter are ready to abandon the dream of independent nationhood, preferring instead the establishment of a joint state with Jordan.

Palestine's fate, it seems, rests on the resolve of the Arab world. It is not a reassuring prospect.

Jonathan Cook is a journalist living in Nazareth, Israel. His latest book is, Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair (Zed Books).

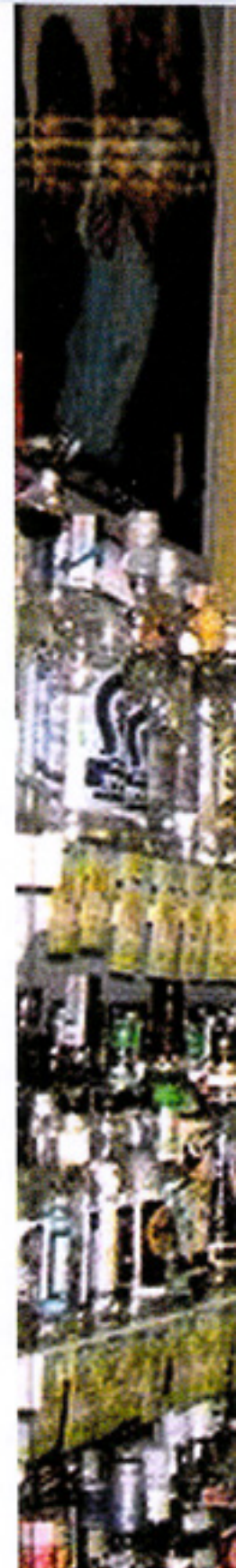
LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISTS ARE AT THE FOREFRONT of calls to hold Sudan and China accountable for the misery in Darfur under the concept of “responsibility to protect.” Yet, many of these same voices did not bring up the concept of responsibility to protect when collective punishment was imposed on the people of Gaza. There is one point that needs to be emphasized here: there is always a litmus test to assess a person's intellectual and moral courage. In the West, especially in America, this litmus test is provided by the Middle East issue.

The intellectual and moral cowardice on this issue in the West is stunning. Paradoxically, by censoring their views on Israel, they have done great damage to Israel by failing to point out to it the sheer folly of remaining in perpetual conflict with its neighbors. The next time any Western intellectual calls upon the rest of the world to show courage by speaking “truth to power,” he or she should lead the charge by speaking “truth to power” on the Israel-Palestine dispute.

No liberal international order can be sustained if it is not seen to be responding to key challenges of the day. If we believe in the United Nations (as I believe we should), we cannot ignore the resolutions of the UN, especially the critical UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, on the Middle East. These resolutions serve the interests of Israel. By walking away from them, American administrations have both damaged Israel and undermined the UN. It is our response to the hard cases which determine where we really stand on the liberal international order.

Kishore Mahbubani

*from New Perspectives Quarterly
Summer 2008.*



Only





in Russia



Only in Canada



IN NORTHERN ALBERTA, A MAN SURVEYS a vast area of heavy, black sand. It reeks of tar. Behind him are a dozen yellow Caterpillars caked with mud and gunk, humming some dismal tune and rolling across the vast plains of Athabasca, scraping at the earth: phase one at one of the last great oil reserves in the world – Canada's prized tar sands.

These oil reserves hold an estimated 173 billion barrels of crude oil, and about five million barrels are extracted every day. Investments tally well over \$200 billion, and every national and multinational

oil company has its hands in the tar. Canada is the single greatest source of oil for the Americans, exporting more than it consumes itself. Now China is also negotiating with Canada for bigger shares in the deposits.

The oil is not easily accessible. Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board estimates that only six percent of the bitumen – the heaviest form of petroleum – is located in shallow deposits. A massive amount of energy and water is used up to produce a single barrel.

Calls have been made to shut all projects down, of course, but with Prime Minister Stephen Harper's disregard of the Kyoto accord and the West's rigid dependence on fossil fuels, and despite all ecological concerns, the tar sands will continue to be exploited. The oil is low quality, extremely poisonous to the environment but high priced. Unless calamity strikes, this will be the beating heart of Canada's economic and political body for years to come.

Steve Smysnuik

AFTER SPENDING MOST OF THE YEAR CHEERING FOR BARACK OBAMA from the sidelines, Canadians did an odd thing last October – they re-elected a prime minister who's been a loyal foot soldier for George W. Bush.

Indeed, even as the rest of the Anglo-American world has shown a keenness to move beyond the conservatism of the Bush era, Canada alone seems stuck in the past, heading into 2009 with a conservative Bush loyalist at its helm.

Certainly the re-election of Stephen Harper as Canada's Prime Minister – even with just another minority government – seems to defy the trend in the United States, Britain and Australia toward more progressive, environmentally-conscious government.

Canada now seems poised to be an outcast among advanced nations when it comes to tackling climate change.

Harper's Conservatives allied themselves with the Bush administration in refusing to take meaningful action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Harper himself is a recovering climate change denier who has gone out of his way to sabo-

invisible to the Canadian public.

For that matter, Harper – whom Bush called “Steve,” a term of affection not even used by Harper's wife – is careful to keep a tight rein on himself. As prime minister, he's projected an image of moderation, even though past statements reveal him to be an unabashed neoconservative in the tradition of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. He was a keen supporter of Bush's invasion of Iraq.

Harper manages to pursue a fairly radical agenda – quite out of sync with Canadian sensibilities – largely by not drawing the public's attention to it.

For instance, he's moved to greatly beef up the Canadian military, and to integrate it more deeply with the US military.

Much of this has been done discreetly. Last June, while most Canadians were asleep, the Harper government quietly revealed a plan – posting it without fanfare on a government website – to spend \$490 billion on the military over the next twenty years.

By Canadians standards, that's a stunning increase in military spending. And, given the scarce resources in these tough

Canada is not just out of sync with much of the world. In many ways, it is out of sync with Canadians.

– *Linda McQuaig*

tage progress at international climate change talks. With his support rooted in oil-rich Alberta, Harper has signed on to fighting climate change with about the same enthusiasm and sincerity with which Exxon now embraces the issue.

But the re-election of this backward-looking government in Canada is not just out of sync with much of the world. In many ways, it is out of sync with Canadians.

Harper was re-elected with only 37 percent of the popular vote. Some 63 percent of Canadians voted for the four centre-left parties which all strongly opposed Harper, and put forward platforms proposing serious action on climate change, as well as more progressive social policies.

Indeed, unlike their government, Canadians seem willing to embrace greener solutions. In Toronto, for instance, residents have largely supported an ambitious municipal program that requires them to spend considerable time sorting garbage from recyclables.

The success of the Harper government seems to have less to do with its political positions than with Harper's ability to turn the Conservative Party into a slick, well-disciplined machine. The party is actually the amalgamation of the venerable Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and the Canadian Alliance, a western upstart Republican-style party.

But Harper keeps a tight rein on the party, ensuring that the social conservatism that still lurks inside it is largely

economic times, it means redirecting public spending towards military contracts and war, rather than more traditional Canadian priorities like health care and social programs.

Harper knows this isn't what Canadians want. In fact, in a survey conducted for his government's finance department early last year, Canadians were asked which of 18 issues they considered a high priority. While they indicated concerns about the economy, health care and consumer protection, their lowest priority among the 18 was “increasing spending on defense.”

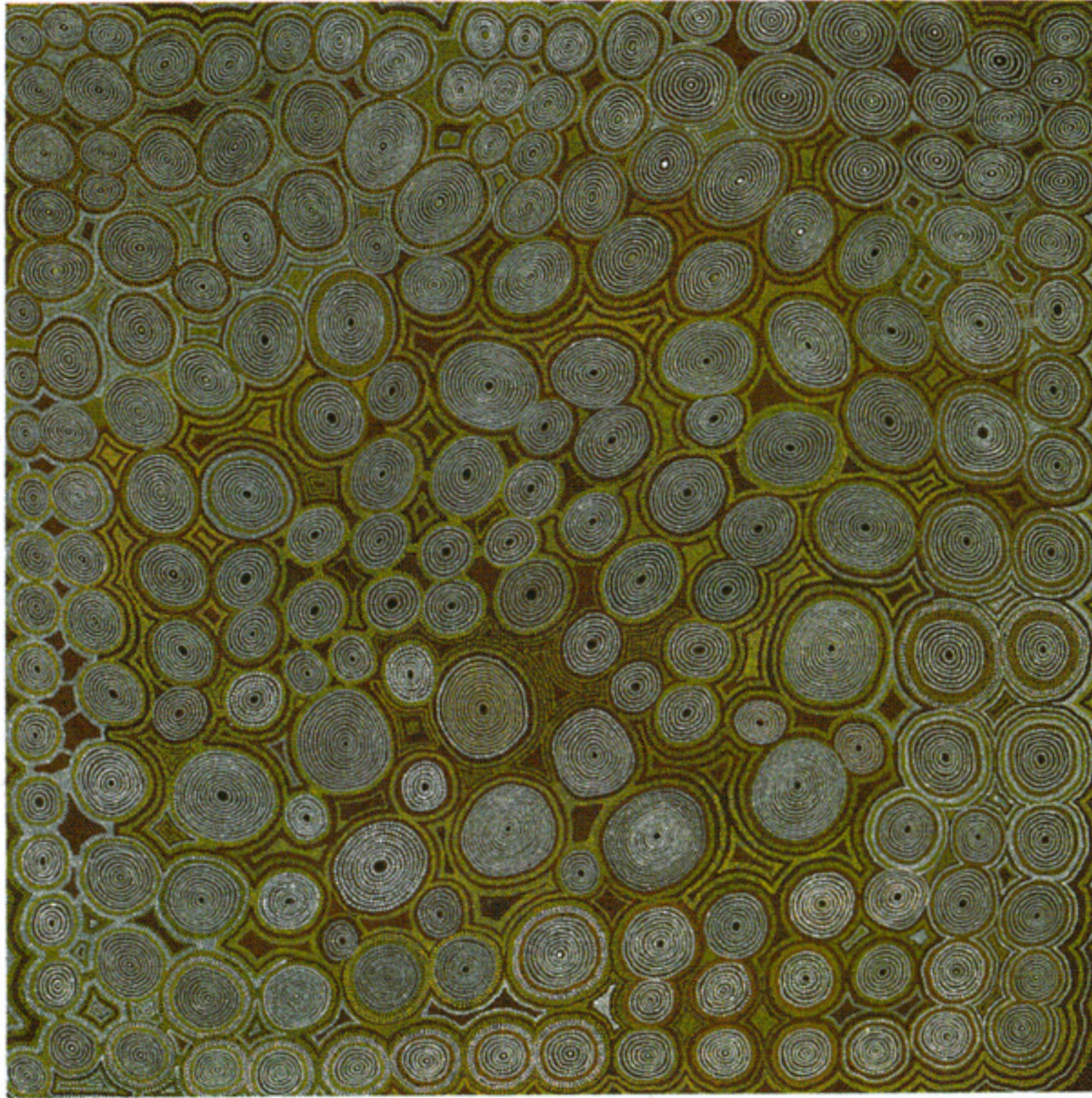
It's hard to imagine an agenda with more profound consequences than this massive hike in military spending – soaking up so much of the nation's resources and contributing to the build-up of a US-style military-industrial complex.

The defense lobby is thrilled. But Canadians would probably be outraged – if they knew about it.

Linda McQuaig is a Canadian journalist and bestselling author. She writes an op-ed column in the Toronto Star and is author of seven Canadian bestsellers, including It's the Crude, Dude: War, Big Oil and the Fight for the Planet. Her most recent book is Holding the Bully's Coat: Canada and the U.S. Empire.

Seismic Shifts Down Under

by Richard Neville



©ANATJARI TJAMPITJINPA
CEREMONIAL GROUND AT KULKUTA
LICENSED BY ABORIGINAL ARTISTS
AGENCY 2008

When Australian voters dumped the Liberal Party in November 2007, citizens of all political persuasions danced in the streets. The world's most boring prime minister, John Howard, was swept from Parliament, rejected by his own electorate and extinguished from public life, nary a soul shedding a tear. After the hangover wore off, Australians discovered a prime minister they hardly knew, Kevin Rudd, an enthusiastic Christian, a workaholic bureaucrat and a fluent speaker of Mandarin. During his first days in office, thunder and lightning flashed from Parliament. Rudd ratified the Kyoto agreement, ended his predecessor's attempt to diminish the historic role of unions in the workforce and promised a withdrawal of Australian troops in Iraq. On February 13, 2008, the new Prime Minister delivered a speech that shook the nation's soul.



"I move that today we honor the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing culture in human history. We reflect on their past mistreatment. We apologize for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on our fellow Australians. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry ..."

I watched the televised speech at home with my hands in the kitchen sink, tears in my eyes and surprised by joy. Thousands of Australians had traveled to the nation's capital to witness this overdue admission. "To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry." The hordes on the lawns could be heard cheering and weeping and clapping. "We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation"

Rudd's "sorry" speech will bolster the prime minister's credit long after his government starts fraying at the seams. Those initial thunderbolts transformed the country's psycho-political landscape. Suddenly, the vast political machine of John Howard's government seemed antiquated and monstrous, like the torture device in Kafka's tale, "In the Penal Colony," which carved the crimes of prisoners on their skin until they bled to death. In the former penal colony of Australia, the Howard government imprisoned those who arrived "unauthorized" on our shores – including children and families fleeing tyranny and wars – and then deported them back to their homelands, sometimes to certain death. As successive UN Commissioners of

Human Rights made clear year after year, this was in "flagrant violation" of international human rights obligations. While the former immigration minister has since expressed "regret" for the jailing of children, the former prime minister still refuses to apologize for

anything: not for insinuating that Australian Muslims were soft on terrorism, not for dispatching troops to Iraq without a public discussion or Parliamentary debate, nor for thumbing his nose at the science of climate change.

The success of Sorry Day was extra sweet because it flew in the face of Howard's prolonged opposition to an apology and his refusal to admit the links between British colonization, land theft and aboriginal despair. Drugs, alcohol, petrol sniffing, poverty, wife beating, child abuse – Howard finally took action to protect children in the only way he knew how – through an "intervention." Led by a former army officer, it shunned consultation with local communities. The tone was bellicose and laced with threats, including "compulsory examinations

of children's genitals."

But why go on? Howard has gone, the tone has mellowed, consultation has improved, and the threats have been withdrawn. A kind of accommodation seems to have been reached between black and white. The age of embarrassment is over. The mention of Howard today evokes titters and derision. Over one million Iraqis dead! If John Howard ever makes headlines again, it better be when he's prosecuted for war crimes.

So, is Kevin Rudd the best man available to guide his citizens through the shoals of the 21st century? Maybe. Maybe not. In April 2008, he hosted the 2020 Summit, a much ballyhooed convention of a thousand luminaries, who set out to probe ten critical areas expected to shape Australia's destiny. Areas such as innovation, sustainability, the digital economy and our steel plated alliance with Uncle Sam. The summit was a fine notion, even if the delegate mix was dominated by politicians,



DAMIAN BAKER



academics, journalists and Cate Blanchett, who chaired the sessions on Creative Australia. For many participants it seemed like a cross between reality TV and a weekend detention. The official resolutions ignored key ideas widely supported – and promoted – numerous policies that had not been discussed. Perhaps the outcome was set in advance. Still, Rudd's ratings in the polls soared above 70 percent, a record high for any prime minister, and Cate's presence added pizzazz and photo-ops.

After Summit Rudd, came Beijing Rudd, a whistle-stop global tour marked by a White House meeting with George Bush and a series of consultations with the presidential hopefuls, followed by afternoon tea with Queen Elizabeth in Buckingham Palace and climaxing in a meeting with Hu Jintao, president of the Peoples

political arena, eventually becoming Queensland's most powerful bureaucrat. From there, it was a hop, step and a jump into the federal scene, where in 1988 he captured a seat for the Labor Party and entered Parliament. Nine years later, on the thrust of a national "Ruddslide" he became prime minister of Australia. Even those who'd been longtime supporters of John Howard seemed content with the outcome.

Rudd's cabinet is enhanced by three brilliant women and a rock star – Midnight Oil frontman/Minister of Environment, Heritage and the Arts Peter Garrett. The mood of the Aboriginal community has brightened. As the West melts down, aboriginal artists are taking a leap – dancing, painting, acting, writing songs, making movies, speaking out. Indigenous design is flourishing – jewelry, architecture, landscaping – and a new tal-

ent arrives on the scene almost every day. A blind singer from North East Arnhem Land, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, has just collected the ARIA "Best New Music" award for his album *Gurrumul*, which is sung mostly in indigenous languages. His talent has been called a "gift from the gods."

But no honeymoon lasts forever. It turns out that Rudd is opposed to same-sex marriage. He supports military adventures, however, and Australian troops were not withdrawn from Iraq but merely re-assigned a non-combat role. More troops were sent to Afghanistan.

Then came the portrait of a naked 12-year-old girl that highlighted the new prime minister's conservative side. An upmarket Sydney gallery displayed the full frontal image of the pubescent young girl for the cover of its invitation to an exhibition by art photographer Bill Henson. Sydney police swooped on the gallery and confiscated images of pubescent children. The tabloid press applauded the censorship and described Henson's work as "child porn." The gallery owners received death threats.

Henson's work has been exhibited worldwide. He presents "adolescents in their states of despair, intoxication and immature ribaldry" notes one critic. His images are not to everyone's taste, and some of them seem a bit creepy. The police action sparked a feisty, if familiar, debate around themes of pedophilia, art,

The tragedy of a modern democracy is that it tethers the imagination of a leader to the drabness of the herd.

Republic of China, where he surprised his hosts with an address to the students at the University of Beijing. "It is clear that human rights abuses are being committed in Tibet," he told them in faultless Mandarin, shocking yet thrilling his audience and later eliciting a stern rebuke from the Communist Party Central Committee. But he got away with it. The Peoples Republic used the occasion to pretend it was tolerant.

In those first hundred days, Rudd must have felt like King of the World. He deserved it, too. This brainy son of a dairy farmer from small-town Queensland – who was kicked off the farm at the age of 11 soon after the death of his dad – was "forced to hop between relatives" with his mother, according to the official story, and to rely on the "bleak charity of the time, occasionally bedding down in the family car." Nonetheless, he kept his head in his text books, topped his classes, cleaned houses for cash, graduated with honors and worked his way up the ladder at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Seven years later, he inched into the

exploitation and free speech. Kevin Rudd, a father of three, dismissed Henson's work as "absolutely revolting ... without artistic merit."

Enter Cate Blanchett, fresh from her starring role at the 2020 Summit, who penned an open letter to the Prime Minister, objecting to his lead-footed intrusion: "The potential prosecution of one of our most respected artists is no way to build a Creative Australia," she wrote "and does untold damage to our cultural reputation." Rudd was unrepentant and affirmed his "deep view" on the subject: "For God's sake, kids deserve to have the innocence of their childhood protected."

Of course they do, Kevin. But why pick on art, when trainer bras and sexy lingerie for 6-years-olds are hot items, when 5-years-olds go to beauty parlors and have makeovers to celebrate their birthdays, when the advertising industry's use of pre-teen "models" is morally questionable at so many levels, when ads for jeans are shot like pornography, when ads for lipstick are shot like pornography, when ads for cars are shot like pornography, and when much of the Internet is drenched in sperm. Why pick on Bill Henson, an artist studied in high schools, when all media is shot through with exploitative and violent sexuality?

Such questions fall on deaf ears. Politicians from the major parties echoed the Prime Minister's views, with an unexpected exception. While Kevin Rudd seemed to morph into former foe John Howard, an electric new voice boomed into the arena. "I don't believe we should have Australian police invading art galleries," said Malcolm Turnbull, lawyer, merchant banker, art collector and rising star of the vanquished Liberal party. "We have a culture of great artistic freedom in this country. We've got to be very careful." Right on. Turnbull was still shadow Minister of the Environment when he said this and today is the leader of the Liberal Party. And tomorrow? A likely Prime Minister of Australia. Turnbull's meteoric rise has spooked the Rudd Government and – yet again – shifted the psycho political landscape.

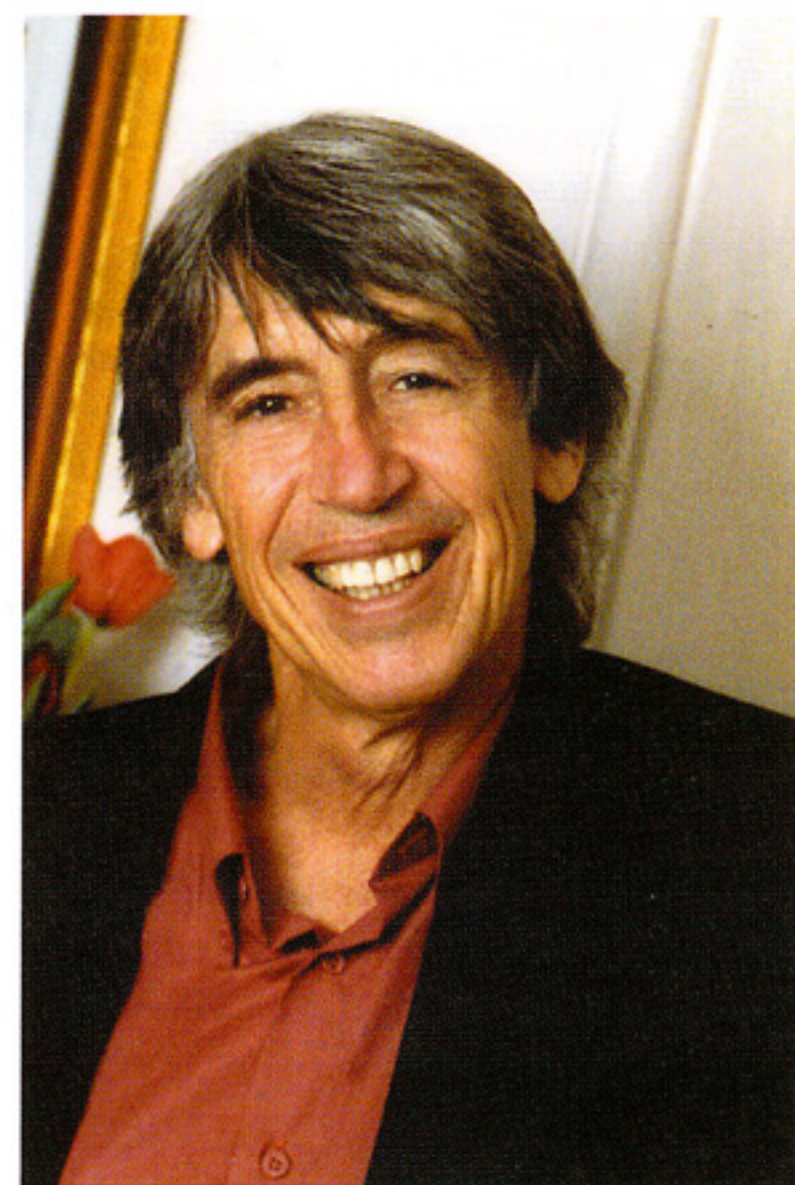
Turnbull's style, wit and sophistication makes Rudd look dowdy and square. While not a supporter of either man's party, I believe this outcome will raise IQs on both sides of the House and enrich the level of debates. Both leaders are smart, driven and ruthless.

Australians always wanted their country to be clever, and now there's a fighting chance. Turnbull is already adapting his views to further his aim of running the country – and the sooner the better. As I write, the Bill Henson controversy is erupting again, and this time Turnbull is playing it safe.

Neither Rudd nor Turnbull are truly surfing the zeitgeist. That honor goes to Greens leader Bob Brown, a longtime champion of sustainability and carbon neutrality, as well as a scathing critic of Australia's unblinking support for US invasions. The Greens are leap years ahead of the rest in keeping the nation informed about climate change and remain a force in Parliament.

To be clever is one thing but to be wise is miraculous. The tragedy of a modern democracy is that it tethers the imagination of a leader to the drabness of the herd. Play to the herd and the votes roll in. Play to the truth, such as leveling with the electorate on the urgency of reducing consumption and re-imagining lifestyles, then you're banished to the fringe. But that's okay. The fringe is where the future is re-invented. And ever more Australians are drawn to the task.

Richard Neville co-launched the satirical Australian magazine, OZ. He later took the magazine to London, where it became the voice of the counterculture. He now lives in Sydney, where he combines his role as a social commentator (www.richardneville.com) with the business of being a futurist (www.richardnevillefuturist.com). Neville's memoir of the underground years, Hippy, Hippy, Shake, has been turned into a motion picture, slated for release in 2009.



Sho sho's house was the Africa I'd been looking for. For two months,

I'd been living and volunteering at the Expanding Opportunities orphanage in Mangu, Kenya. The orphanage had given me a sturdy house with electricity where I'd been eating oatmeal and drinking sodas and generally being very comfortable. My hosts and their friends owned cars and cell phones and had plenty to eat, and that was all very nice. But when Bev Stone, the director of Expanding Opportunities, asked if anyone wanted to accompany her "into the bush" to pick up a new kid who was living with an impoverished, very elderly woman named Sho sho, I jumped at the chance.

This child, I later learned, was the great-grandson of Sho sho. The child's mother, a relative of the couple acting as "parents" at the orphanage, had left him with Sho sho when he was born, then disappeared. Sho sho was, according to Bev, nearing a hundred years old, and was also supporting her mentally challenged daughter and her four kids. Their only income was from vegetables in a small garden.

We drove most of the way to Sho sho's house, until we got to a small set of shops in between two large cow pastures. There we left the white, just-washed Toyota Corolla and crossed the street to a small dirt path running perpendicular to the road. We hired two local men to carry the presents we'd brought for Sho sho, and they took off in front, carrying bags full of cooking oil, flour and juice. The path brought us through a thin tree line, and then suddenly we were on a ledge with a valley the size of the Atlantic expanding in front of us. Small hills bubbled up across the landscape, dotted with huts, cow fields and farms. Bev pointed to the nearest hill. "See that little house on the top?" she said. "That's where she lives." We set off down the slope, pausing periodically to take pictures of chameleons on the nearby bushes as we made our way through the skinny, dusty paths, totally unfit for any automobile.

Down the valley and up the hill to Grandmother's house we went, eventually reaching the little homestead that Bev had pointed out. Two toddlers ran to greet us but they grew more cautious as we got closer. One, a little boy, was wearing tattered sneakers that revealed his toes and a grime-colored shirt. "That must be him," Bev said. "He's about the age Penny's son would be."

Sho sho's daughter ushered us into the sitting room. The space was bare, except for a wooden table and some chairs that were lacking their cushions. The walls were insulated with cardboard and decorated with chalk drawings, presumably created by the older children. On the door of the threadbare room was a benevolent greeting: "Welcome all visitors in this house. Welcome again and again." Looking around the room, I was surprised by how clean it was. The building housed five children, yet there were no toys or dishes strewn about, no messes shoved into the corners. It would dawn on me later on that the kids kept the house clean simply because they had no possessions with which to mess it up.

We were told by Sho sho's daughter that her mother had gone to the river to get water. We trooped down the thin dirt path that had been dug into the side of the hill by years of foot traffic. The river was in a relatively low area, so we saw it from above before we reached it. A small group of women were gathered, trying to scoop up what water was left after the two-year drought. As they finished filling their twenty-liter drums, they hoisted them onto their backs, throwing straps around their foreheads to hold them in place, and climbed up the hill.

Sho sho came last. Before strapping her jug on, she stopped to shake our hands, and I understood that Bev had not been exaggerating when she'd said Sho sho was almost 100 years old. Her skin had weathered to tar paper and her eyes had taken refuge deep in their sockets. Standing about four and a half feet tall, Sho sho hoisted the water, which, at 40 pounds, must have been half her weight, onto her back and started toward the house, indicating for us to go in front of her. As we returned to the house, Sho sho carried the water all the way, defiantly refusing help.

Our visit at the house was brief, as Sho sho was uncomfortable with the attention that the presence of white people drew from the neighbors. We declined her customary offer of tea, not sure of the water's cleanliness, and quickly discussed the logistics of Sho sho bringing Brian, as we learned his name was, to the orphanage. Then we were off, hiking back up to the road, Sho sho walking with us, wiping tears out of her eyes.

Brian came to live with us a few days later. I felt proud to be part of an organization that could bring this kid away from the ugliness of hunger and inadequate shelter. Yet I kept thinking of those chalk drawings on the walls and the doors, and the way Sho sho had offered us tea, although she and her kids were hungry. Her family was beautifully generous and loving, if impoverished, and I was sorry Brian wouldn't grow up running through those dirt paths with his cousins. But real life doesn't have simple solutions. I'd found the real Africa, and it was just as complicated as it should have been.

Saima Sidik spent six months living in Mangu, Kenya in 2006 and she hopes to return there soon.

BUY NOTHING DAY(S)

FOR YEARS, BUY NOTHING DAY ACTIVISTS HAVE BEEN TRYING to inspire the world to consume less, to reduce its spending and reassess its needs. We have been warning that the logic of consumer capitalism is fundamentally flawed, that it is unsustainable and built on a model of limitless growth that is destined to fail.

Now the global economy has come crashing down. Markets are stalling, banks closing, billionaires are begging for bailouts. And for millions of people throughout the world, everyday has become a Buy Nothing Day – whether they like it or not.

But it won't last. The markets will rebound, the dollar will rise. The neoclassical model of growth will stubbornly and spitefully refuse to die. Conditions, for a time, will appear normal. Or will they?

What we now face is an opportunity – a brief chance to grab hold of the reins of capitalism and take control.

On November 28th, we challenge each one of the world's richest billion people (that means you!) to take part in a 24-hour General Consumer Strike – sending a message to the economic elite that it will be us, and not them, who will control the future of capitalism. And then we challenge the world's citizens to come together this holiday season and celebrate life in a more meaningful, creative way. Instead of buying into a holiday defined by consumption, create your own meaning and help transform a season of waste into an act of cultural regeneration.

www.adbusters.org

abillion

We must slow down fast money with the Tobin tax*

YES

NO

*The Tobin tax is a proposed 0.1-0.25% sales tax on foreign currency transfers. It is designed to dissuade people from moving currency around the globe in unregulated financial markets in order to profit from exchange rate fluctuations.

THE ONE FLAG

A
FIRST
THINGS
FIRST
PROJECT

DESIGN COMPETITION



votes.org

Both Israel and Iran must renounce
nuclear weapons*

YES

NO

*Israel maintains a policy of deliberate ambiguity regarding its nuclear arsenal, but is known to have around 50 Jericho II nuclear-armed missiles with a range of 900-2,700 miles, capable of reaching every Mideast capital and parts of Russia. Iran is a number of years away from having nuclear weapons capability.

Final deadline December 1

adbusters.org/oneflag

WORDS

ADBUSTERS 81

Editor-in-Chief: Kalle Lasn

Art Director: Will Brown

Managing Editor: Claire Leila Philipson

Contributing Editors: Roland Kelts,
Sarah Nardi, Eric Rumble, Micah White

Editorial Intern: Steve Smysniuk

Editorial Assistant: Emily Kendy

Art Assistant: Lieke de Vink

Copyeditor: George Atherton

Creative Consultant: Douglas Haddow

Campaigns Manager: Paul Cooper

Web Developer: Abdul Rehman Khawar

Social Marketing Manager: Lauren Bercovitch

Finance Manager: Daniel Zomparelli

ABTV Creative Director: Trevor Renney

Blackspot Marketing: Jon Mandell

Administrative Coordinator: Twyla Smith

Fundraising Assistant: Aimee Laurel

Accounting: Kenn Lackner

Publishers: Kalle Lasn, Bill Schmalz

Volunteers: George Atherton, Mike Rae, Liana

Grace, Laurel Millar, Marie Elliot, Bryan Irving,

Connie Eng, Kevin Marsh

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Talk to us:

E-MAIL:

editor@adbusters.org

artdirector@adbusters.org

campaigns@adbusters.org

subscriptions@adbusters.org

TELEPHONE:

tel: (604) 736-9401

toll-free: (800) 663-1243

fax: (604) 737-6021

POST:

1243 West 7th Avenue

Vancouver, British Columbia

V6H 1B7 Canada

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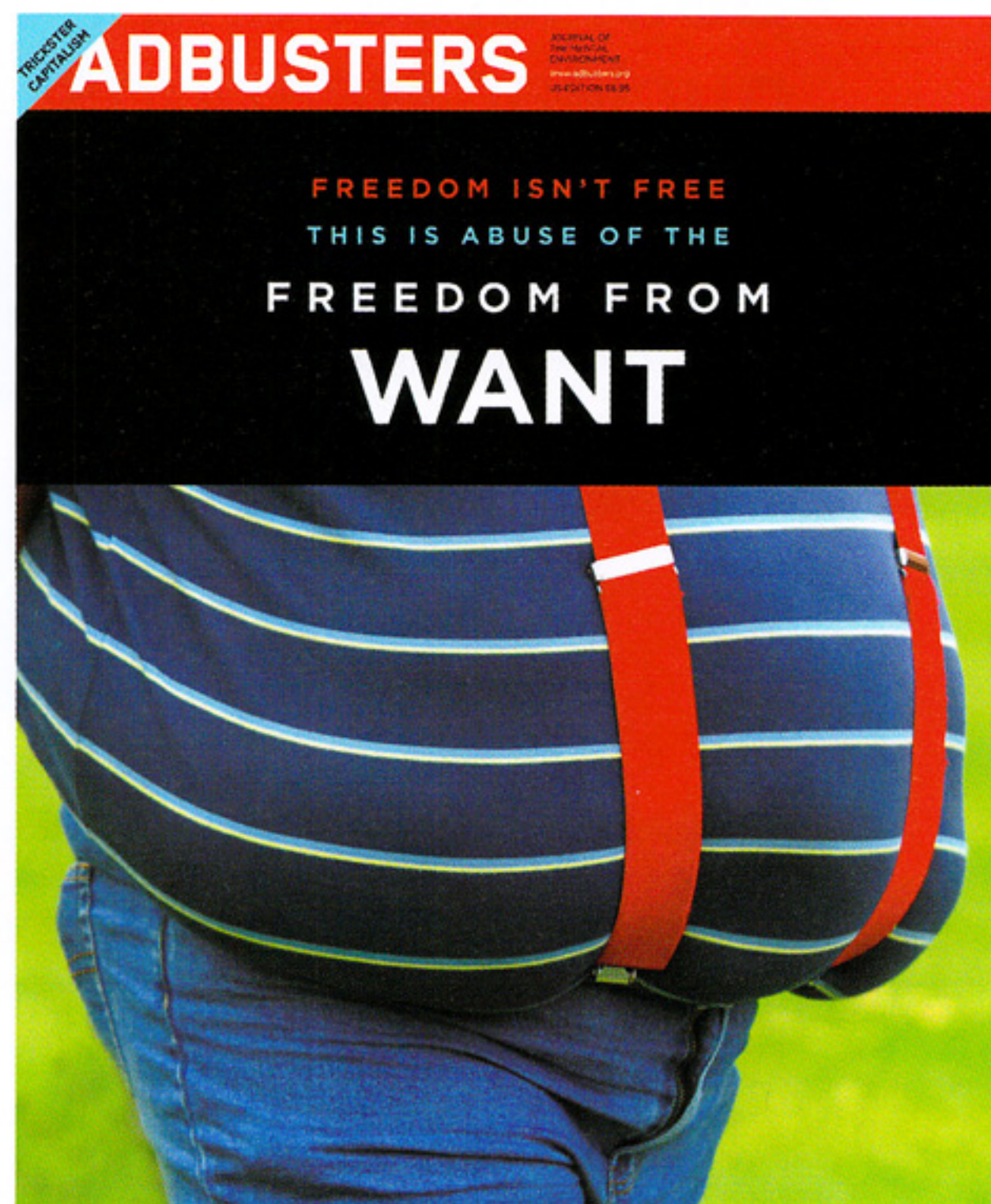
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<ADBUSTERS.ORG>

CLEVER. DIVIDE Adbusters #79 into two halves – West and East – just as the world is said to be. And anyone with eyes can see the Western world is as you depict it: homogenized, greedy, superficial, artificial, deadened. But are we really to believe the East is now so different? Chinese-flavored capitalism, Japanese-flavored capitalism and Korean-flavored capitalism are still capitalism. And I would suggest if you honestly look at the kind of culture the Eastern-flavored economies are producing, it tends to resemble what you'll find in Los Angeles, New York, London and Paris.

Your yin is faithful to reality but your yang needs some work.

Guano
via email



ADBUSTERS 81 FRONT COVER



DESIGN & LAYOUT: Pedro Inoue
PHOTOGRAPHERS: Leong Ka Tai,
Bell Soto

BACK COVER



PHOTOGRAPHER: Loe Russell
CREATIVE CONSULTANT: Douglas Haddow
STYLIST: Jon Mandell

WHILE ORDINARILY I ENJOY YOUR magazine very much, I was disappointed to read a reference to, "US attempts to create a balance of power that favors democracy," in the excerpt from *What Does China Think?* by Mark Leonard [Adbusters #79]. Because, despite rhetoric to the contrary, the US has never been guided by a desire to spread democracy. Whether it is destroying democratically elected

sort of thing was demonstrably true, and relatively widespread, a generation or two ago. But today, Strachan's argument is unlikely.

The far likelier cause of traumatic birthing processes is the particular breed of capitalism that we have and the way it positions profit over people or, in this case, patients. C-sections, like any other surgery, are far more lucrative than straight vaginal births. This profit-driven

education, counseling and support before, during and after the baby is born, by not interfering unnecessarily with the birth process and by getting appropriate medical attention for mother or baby if it should be needed. For more information about midwives, go to nwmidwives.org, mana.org or cfmidwifery.org.

Susan Moray, CPM, LDM
Portland, OR, USA



I have seen stickers like this stuck up around a London. I really love the message they are trying to create. People today seem so controlled and so willing to accept anything, almost without question. New meanings can be created anywhere, meanings that will get people thinking.

Anonymous
London, England

governments in Guatemala and Nicaragua, installing the Shah in Iran or Pinochet in Chile, the US demonstrates time and time again that its international relations are motivated from the greedy interests of the wealthy capitalist class in our country and anything that will keep them on top, not an interest in democracy or a "balance" of power.

Lindsay Rajt
Louisville, KY, USA

S HONAGH STRACHAN'S ARTICLE ON THE cruelties of modern childbirth [Adbusters #80] is retrograde insofar as she places blame on the "modern patriarchal institutionalized world," "capitalist patriarchy" and "misogynistic forces." Her final statement precisely identifies the cause of traumatic birthing procedures as a patriarchal fear of female empowerment. This

dynamic shows up all over the health industry and adversely affects females and males alike. So, put blame where blame is due – the capitalist exploitation of our bodies.

Jeff Fry
via email

A SA HOMEBIRTH MIDWIFE I frequently hears stories like Ms. Strachan's from my clients (not patients – they're not sick and pregnancy is not an illness) who are taking back birth and making different choices for themselves, their family and their baby.

The word "midwife" means "with woman." In the simplest terms, a midwife is a knowledgeable and experienced person (usually a woman) who helps a woman have a healthy, normal pregnancy and give birth to a healthy baby. A good midwife does this by offering

ANDREW TUPLIN'S *Virtual Morality* PIECE [Adbusters #80] was a very realistic glimpse of the present day. My wife and I both teach in public schools and we have noticed a strange trend among children (nearly all boys) in terms of virtual influences. Our more socially challenged students seem to be recreating video game environments and actions on the playground. Instead of playing sports or socializing with friends, they often play fight, acting as characters from popular games. Even more troubling is that many of these children play alone.

Chris Kovarik
meatFREEmind.org

I READ YOUR ARTICLE ON THE morality of virtual fantasies with great interest. One line in particular caught my eye: "...what kind of

This article first appeared in the September 22, 2008 edition of *Advertising Age*.

WAL-MART	COCA-COLA	MICROSOFT	IBM	GOOGLE
↑	↓	↓	↓	↓
+3.6 BILLION	-3.6 BILLION	-5.1 BILLION	-0.4 BILLION	-5.6 BILLION

Top 100 global brands hemorrhage \$67B in value

By NATALIE ZMUDA
nzmuda@adage.com

THE FLAILING ECONOMY has drained \$67 billion in value from the top 100 global brands—even before the investment-bank crisis last week.

So says Brand Finance, a London-based brand-valuation consultancy. The company released its Brand Finance Global 500 in March but was compelled to update it in

late summer due to an economy roiled by consumer uncertainty, rising commodity prices, a credit crunch, rising unemployment and a shaky stock market.

David Haigh, CEO of Brand Finance, said a number of brands have shifted as consumer priorities readjust. Discounter Wal-Mart edged Coca-Cola out of the top slot

See **BRAND VALUE** on Page 60

LET'S KEEP THIS TREND GOING!

Despite their multi-billion-dollar marketing clout, Starbucks, McDonald's, Exxon Mobil, and Nike are losing their grip on the public imagination like never before. We're seeing a great uncooling of the megabrands. The mighty swoosh, the golden arches, the generic latte — they're all ripe for the picking now — vulnerable to well-executed jujitsu demarketing campaigns. And Blackspot antipreneurs have never had a greater opportunity to step in and steal market share away from them.

go small,
go slow,
go local

blackspotshoes.org



fantasies should be condoned?" I wonder if this is a meaningful question – whether you meditate or role-play, where is the harm in coming to know yourself? In light. In darkness. In wholeness, most of all. For those with the courage to look, I see no immorality in this.

My mind is my own. I am sick of people telling me what I can and cannot do with it.

Cristina
via email

at an arcade, overweight and playing a first-person shooter. I saw videogames for sale titled *Manhunt*, *Combined Assault* and *Grand Theft Auto*.

I went out into the sunlight and started feeling better.

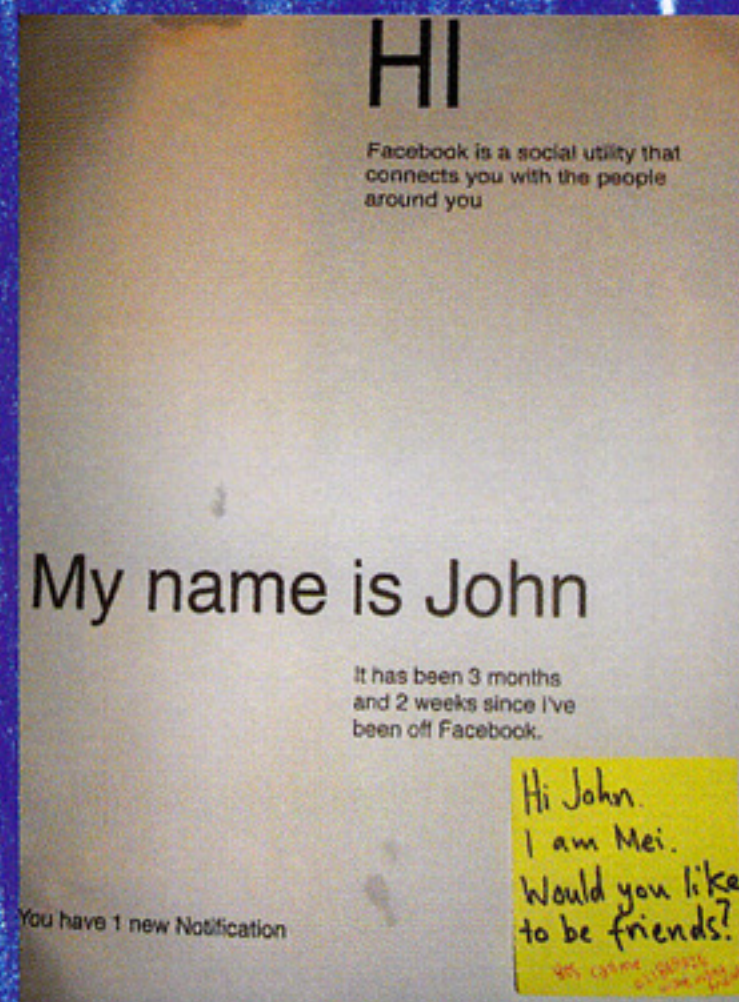
American media: you make me sick.

Scott Newton Allen
Oklahoma City, OK, USA

This is not vandalism with a purpose. It is random. What we saw at the Chinese Garden was an example of how self-centered our world has become. The messages are not protests or cries for help. They are not directed at anyone else. I am sure that every act of vandalism was done specifically for the entertainment of those who were present while it was being done. I don't think there was any real malice. I think these youths simply are self-centered.

I FOUND THIS SIMPLE, YET COMPELLING confession taped to a local bus shelter. I propose that this year we all embrace Mental Detox Week and log off the network. Let the Internet slide. Offer your friends gifts of real flowers, baked goods or framed photos. You can't eat pixels, and true camaraderie is not subject to bandwidth.

Nicky Andrews
Auckland, New Zealand



AS OF SEPTEMBER 22, 2008 AT 10:51 PM I am committing MySpace suicide. I know I'll be leaving many dear friends behind, but I just can't go on. Please don't be angry with me, but the pain of friend surveys and advertisements was simply too much to bear. See you in the afterlife or, as I like to call it, real life.

Remember me fondly.

Dave
via email

TOXIC CULTURE

AFTER LIVING ABROAD FOR A year, my wife and I decided to reintroduce ourselves to American culture by checking out the latest blockbuster movie. We were stunned right from the start. It was difficult to watch the screen, the volume of collisions and explosions was so high. I sat through the torture scenes, which now seem to be written into every other movie. Do we enjoy our nightmares? Violence, sickness, death – we seem to celebrate them.

I left the movie running and stumbled toward the daylight streaming in through the mall's nearest entrance. I saw children

I SPENT A COUPLE OF HOURS today in the River Valley, enjoying the weather with my partner. She glowed, I smiled and the birds sang – it was something out of an olde tyme Disney movie. But one thing marred the perfection of this beautiful afternoon in the park. The Chinese Garden in Louise McKinney Park, which is not even a year old, is already spattered with vandalism. A polished marble table has been spray-painted, the polished granite rail of the pagoda is covered in names and foul language, and many of the granite sculptures depicting signs of the Chinese horoscope have been marred and broken. What could make someone destroy something so beautiful?

These youths are a mirror into our own society showing us all just how self-centered we have become.

Dave Zylstra
Edmonton, AB

THE OTHER DAY MY MUM took me with her to visit my grandma, and started complaining about how much junk we have in our attic and how it preys on her mind so much that she's planning a huge clear-out. My grandma told me again how she grew up on a farm in Ireland with 14 brothers and sisters. They couldn't afford shoes. For Christmas, they each got an orange and a doll made out of potatoes. Since they had so little waste, and there was



I MADE THIS T-SHIRT with my daughter as a fun lesson in considering the messages we see from advertisers like McDonald's. Why do kids in developed countries get toys with their food while other kids don't get food or toys?

Mike Caron
South Hadley, MA

no rubbish collection, they could leave all of their trash to biodegrade in a compost heap in one of the fields.

In one generation, my family has gone from having just enough to survive to having so much crap that it affects our mental health. And from the stories my grandma tells about her childhood, I don't know if it has made our lives any better.

Caroline
via email

IN AMERICA, WE HAVE BECOME SO USED to living as faux rich people, buying anything and everything on credit and borrowing ourselves into economic oblivion. This will not stand. I have an inclination that a new frugal generation is being born as I write this, a generation built on necessity. A generation learning to be self-sufficient like our great and great-great-grandparents' generations. Learning to hunt, fish, gather and farm will be crucial. Those who don't figure it out in time will fall prey to Darwin.

Anonymous
via email

A FEW DAYS AGO I HAD a delightful conversation with my class of grade 4 students. The topic was standard of living, defined as the quantity and quality of the things deemed necessary for a healthy and productive life.

We brainstormed a huge list of items from food, water, heat, clothing, homes, vehicles, schools, health care, jobs, training, hospitals, parks, swimming pools, vacations (theme parks in particular), TV, computers, video games, toys, etc.

I then asked the kids what they thought about their standard of living. "Not bad" and "pretty good" were the predominant responses.

"So, do you think everyone deserves to have these things?" I asked.

"Of course they do!"

"Are you sure there isn't some group of people somewhere on the planet that doesn't deserve these things?"

"Absolutely not!" they replied.

"Well then, how many planet earths do you think are necessary to provide everyone with the same as what we enjoy?"

Puzzled looks and blank stares faced me.

"At present 5 percent of the global population (us) consumes 20 percent of all the energy produced and natural resources extracted. If everyone were to adopt the lifestyle of a typical 'Americanadian,' we would need 4 planet earths!"

Silence.

Then a very small voice from the back of the class said, "Mrs. Kaljur, we have too much stuff."

Excellent observation...class dismissed.

Susanna Kaljur
Courtenay, BC

ACTION

I was in Borders (Oxford, UK) not too long ago – the only place in this city where your magazine is available, and I noticed that there was

ABOUT 2 YEARS AGO, a friend showed me a daily agenda she'd picked up from an anarchist collective in Edmonton. I scanned over the "tips for dropping out of the economy" list and immediately rejected most of them as too radical and hardly conducive to my student life. One of the tips, however, was extremely simple and definitely within my capabilities: to black out logos and brand names from various advertisements around campus with an indelible black marker.

Around that time, I discovered that businesses and corporations held more voting power at my university than the students, staff and faculty combined. I told my father about this new discovery and he enthusiastically provided me with one giant marker, perfect for "vandalism."

"It's not vandalism," I explained to my mother, "if you are defacing what shouldn't really be there." I believed advertisements had no business on my university campus. I used the marker to black out brand names everywhere I could, on campus and off.

The same marker was used to black out brand names printed on small balls and other toys my father had been given as promotional "gifts" from the company he works for. He had given these items to me to take to Bhopal, India, site of the 1984 Union Carbide chemical disaster. I was going there to set up an activities program for slum children, based out of the Sambhavna Trust clinic that gives free health-care to those affected by the events of December 2, 1984. I refused to be responsible for advertising companies like IBM and HP in the community that I was going to be living.

I spent months in Bhopal, living ten minutes from the abandoned Union Carbide factory, in one of the poorest slums perpetually affected for over 25 years by the gruesome and varied effects of globalization, consumerism and the green revolution. My marker helped produce protest posters and publicity materials for the



International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal. In February 2008, I had the privilege of marching through the streets of Delhi with hundreds of Bhopalis, protesting the continuous and unjust poisoning of their communities by Union Carbide, its current owner, Dow Chemical, and the Indian government.

During my time in India, I had the opportunity to travel throughout Tamil Nadu, visiting various export processing zones – or "mini Bhopals," as they're referred to among many wonderful Indian environmental activists. I met children who, at three years old, couldn't walk or talk due to chlorine gas poisoning from PVC factories. I met with fishing communities who were forcibly removed from their beach hamlets because of a supposed "Tsunami risk," only to have a five-star hotel erected on that land.

I've provided two photos from my travels in India to illustrate what I'm talking about. Both photos, upon first glance, appear to be of children playing carelessly, but those piles of "dirt" the boys are climbing in the first photo are actually piles of solid toxic waste – itchy to the touch and loaded with toxins that have been leaching into the groundwater for almost 24 years. These children are playing in water contaminated by such heavy metals as lead and mercury, which will eventually lead to serious illnesses and deformities.

The second photo was taken on the beach in Chennai. These boys, playing on a set of bars, will likely be forced off the only homes they've ever known to make way for a highly profitable Tamil Nadu state development project that will pave over these fishing hamlets in order to build an elevated six lane highway along the coast.

When I returned home to Montreal in April, I was overwhelmed by an increasingly pessimistic view concerning the state of our planet and the billions of people living on it. We can change this. I have learned through my travels that the most important thing we can do to help the developing world is to instigate a dramatic shift in our consumerist behavior.

Mel
Montreal, PQ, Canada



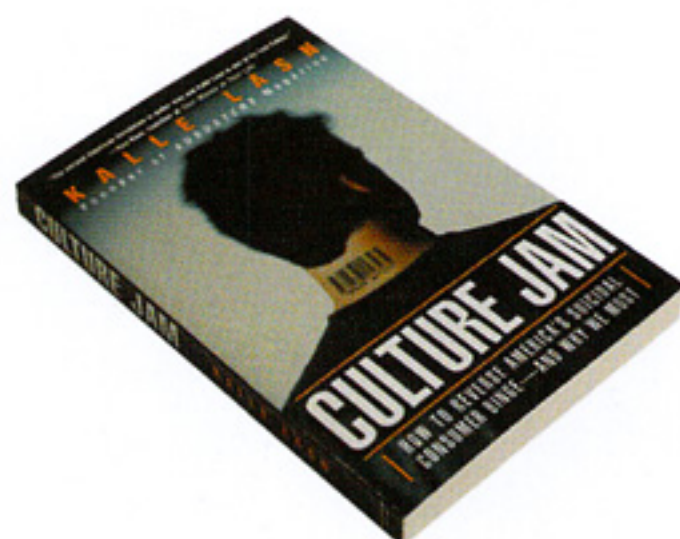
THE CULTURE SHOP

Tools for Activists



THE MAGAZINE

Become a core member of the movement.



CULTURE JAM

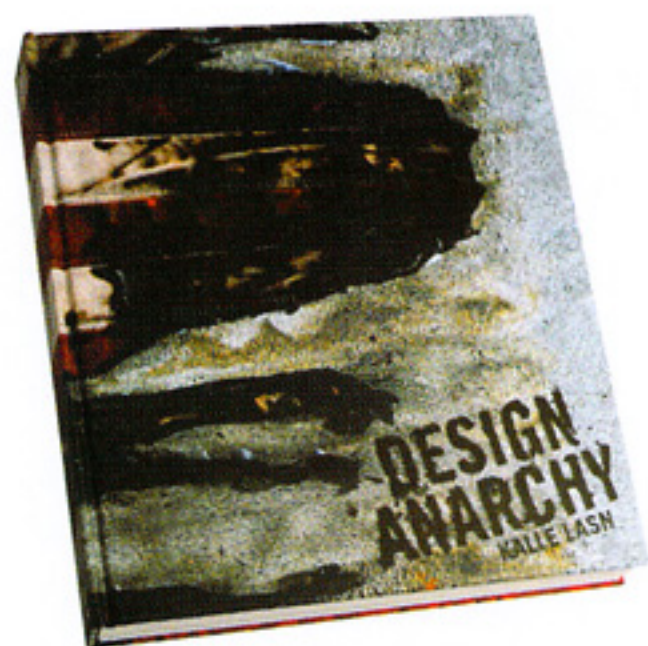
The culture jammer's bible by Kalle Lasn.



THE MEDIA LITERACY KIT

Teachers, empower your students to create their own meaning.

ADBU STERS .ORG



DESIGN ANARCHY

We design ourselves out of a terrifying future.



THE CORPORATE AMERICA FLAG

Hang it on your wall or wave it at a protest.

a gaping gap where Adbusters usually sits in the News and Current Affairs section. Assuming they'd sold out, I asked at the info counter whether they were due for another shipment of the current issue. The attendant eagerly tapped away at the keyboard and gleefully informed me that no, in fact, they had simply relocated the remaining stack of Adbusters #79 to the Art and Fashion section as they had realised that, strictly speaking, it did not constitute News and Current Affairs.

I strolled over to the Art and Fashion section, rubbing my hands and drooling slightly. During a quick scan of the chic airbrushed covers that I so loathe, I failed to identify Adbusters because the cover merged so well into the dirge of pretentious bullshit that infests the "art" section at Borders. Adbusters seems to have cut such a niche that no one knows where to put it, and so it flails helplessly in a sea of aesthetics and cultural sterility waiting for people like me to rescue it and give it a deserving home.

I thought I'd throw this issue a lifeline, so I grabbed all remaining ten copies and lined them up on the front row literally blocking out the competition. The attendant walked right passed and didn't flinch. I went for a wander for twenty minutes or so and noticed on my return that three issues had vanished – sold, I presume.

Bring Adbusters to the foreground. Society needs it.

Julian David Agudelo
via email

MY BEST FRIEND THINKS THAT she's fat. She thought she was fat at 125 pounds, and she still thinks she's fat, only months later, at 85. No matter how many times I tell her that she isn't fat, my voice will never compare to the 3,000 voices she hears every day from advertisements that tell her otherwise.

So I'm joining your revolution. Please send help.

Anonymous
Nova Scotia

I WROTE AN ESSAY THAT WAS published in Adbusters #74 called Summer of Love.

On the strength of that essay, I quit my job at MTV and bought a one-way ticket to Washington, DC to protest the war. I hitched around for another three months, visited old college friends and tried to lead a life worth writing about.

One rainy morning in San Francisco I walked into a classroom to give a presentation about media literacy to a group of high school seniors. The group stayed into their lunch break. We spoke about direct action, and I heard that a few of them even gave their teachers letters to mail to representatives.

That afternoon I walked into City Lights Bookstore and found a response to my essay in *Adbusters* #75. It was one of the best days of my life.

Tyler
via email

WHEN I FIRST ENCOUNTERED *Adbusters*, I thought it was amazing; the quality of the artwork, words and ideas resonated with me. When I settled on a PhD studying creative community empowerment, I figured I could probably justify whacking a subscription to *Adbusters* on my expense account. After all, it would be an invaluable heads-up on projects I could study. But when I read it recently, all I get are soundbites, endless reiterations of malaise and the same old story about how Britain and America messed up Iran. We don't need to be told we're lost and we need direction. We need to be shown how people are empowering themselves, liberating themselves, caring more. Please give us more in-depth examples of people doing it for themselves.

Dave Rock
Galway, Ireland

EPIPHANIES

DESPITE THE MONOLITHIC NATURE OF pervasive corporate strategy that infuses cultures with its lucrative systems of beliefs, a wellspring of hope is arising from beneath the lid of Pandora's box. This hope is found within the growing networks of free communities forming, sharing and connecting their dots like constellations around the globe.

Culture-jamming is a double-edged



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sword. Sometimes its capacity to cut, criticize and condemn the unjust comes to the fore. But this is only half the battle.

The other half is a party. The jamming that brings a smile and nourishes the free spirit, the freedom to laugh and be merry, to love and celebrate a life worth living.

Let's nurture hope and empower true happiness. Let's walk through congested streets at rush hour as buoyant as can be, spreading our smiles like a real message of freedom.

The new idea for 2009 is so simple it's silly – just be happy.

Taylor Judson
via email

AGUY WAS WALKING DOWN OUR street last week with a hiking backpack on. A bunch of us were sitting on our porch enjoying the sunshine, and my friend Jeff shouted to the guy, "Are you walking across the United States?" He said his name was Chris and that he was indeed walking across the country. We invited him for dinner. Over a week later Chris is still here, bringing the population of the house to eight. When was the last time when an advertised product in a magazine or on a billboard enabled us to be more hospitable?

You want a big idea for 2009? How about making family with strangers who walk past our houses.

Simon Cunningham
Grand Rapids, MI, USA

SHUT UP FOR A DAY! SHHHHH. We'd all go about our usual business without talking, radio, TV, newspapers, comment, speculation, joking, debating, etc., etc., etc.

Village by town by city. Stop! Be quiet and see what happens.

James Kemp
via email

**SEND YOUR LETTERS, PHOTOS,
AND ARTWORK TO**

editor@adbusters.org
artdirector@adbusters.org
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CORRECTION: In issue 80, Professor Sharon Zukin was regretfully misquoted at the end of the editorial Obama piece. The words "for now, we should all wallow in our Obamamania by buying Obama soap, Obama panties, Obama shoes, and anything else that confirms him as the cultural mammoth he has become" were in fact author Bobby Allyn's.



WE MEASURE AN ARTIST BY MANY THINGS BUT UNTIL now, the ability to power through a bear market has never been one of them. British artist Damien Hirst grabbed headlines once again this year by audaciously staging an auction of multi-million dollar works in one of the worst financial climates of the past decade. While his smug demeanor and unfathomable prices indicate an aloof oblivion to the state of the world around him, his floating animal carcasses are perhaps the perfect metaphor for our collective aesthetic sensibility – cold, dead and teetering on the brink of decomposition.



And then the rains came. Heavy and bloody, the drops fell like bullets nailing an enemy platoon for several days. The wind lashed relentlessly at weak infrastructure and the streets swelled, choking on the debris that now clogged all routes to the underworld. Thus we were trapped on earth.

He sat and watched. His house, worn and fragile, did not falter in the storm. Though the walls and windows were thin, the roof remained sturdy above him and the carpet plush under his feet, a small but symbolic circumstance he tried not to notice. Despite the shit-storm that hailed just beyond his threshold, the atmosphere inside was quiet and mundane. The television was on, running its course of evening drivel and the nauseating succession of advertisements. Diane Sawyer, his beloved news anchor, was mouthing rhetoric meant to address the failing economy, the disintegration of the middle-class and the panic on Wall Street. But for the time being, her words did not press or stir him. Instead, they flowed through his brain, softening his memories and quelling his fears about his own flaws and failures. Every minute, he would grunt or clear his throat, spitting when necessary. Every five minutes, he would check on his teams, his carefully

managed soccer players that he systematically controlled with limited exertion. Every twenty minutes, he would place his machine on the floor and light a cigarette, inoculating his brain with more numbing stimulus.

Somewhere beyond the four walls of his house were people that were related to him, some by blood, some by association and some by circumstance. Without thinking of the individuals, he regretted the sum of their ills and the path their actions (and inactions) had carved for him. Gripped by loss and shackled by indifference, he began to tell himself stories of the greatness of his ancestors, the purity of his blood, and the authenticity of his origin as if to stir a tolerance for his very own flesh. He was, as he believed, born of lions and kings, who, according to him, had thrived for thousands of years. His skin was encoded with this privilege, and his chest was marked with proof. Neither smoking nor drinking could deteriorate his body, for his bloodline would not allow it.

Yet his feet were callused and his thighs were cracked. His skin, usually lustrous, was now dull from dehydration and malnourishment. His hair, typically thick with textured coils, was scant from stress, so much that he needed to wear a cap to keep his wired hands from pulling at it. His chest, once ripe with muscle, was now flattened, as if paying tribute to his growing gut. Still youthfully virile and hormonally potent, he maintained a high level of attractiveness to ladies young and old, an attribute that he often exploited to rouse others and reaffirm his sexual potential, though every now and again he would boldly assert that he was not handsome, whenever he was told that he was, as if not to miss an opportunity to redeem a token of humility.

Tonight, this storm enveloped his suburban street with darkness as if to sentence the poor souls to hell on earth. Rain begotten, he had felt this way for some time now. Though the nightly newscasters attributed the heavy showers to Hurricane Ike, a tropical catastrophe that had just blighted the coast of Texas, he wondered if this wasn't his fate and what, if anything, he should do about it.

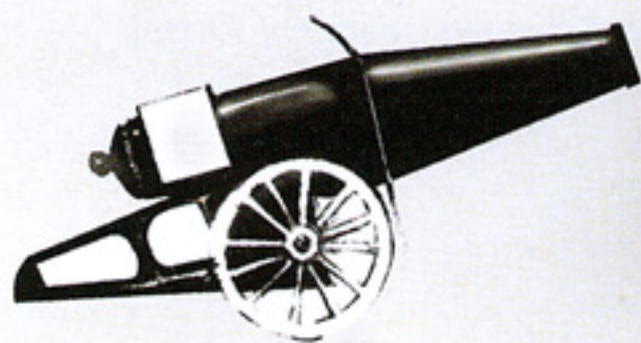
Chelsea Zuzindlak is an anthropologist at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. Her current research aims to record the untold stories and memories of Detroit Chinatown (<http://www.detroitchinatown.org>).



find



**BEST
BUY**



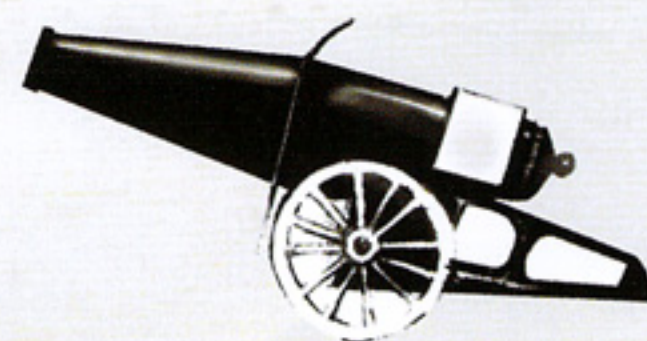


your balance

TWO PEOPLE HAVE LOST THEIR HEADS and are struggling to get a new one. With a nostalgic nod to simple games, Indonesian artist Agus Suwage's Yin-Yang installation criticizes the dominion of industry, environment-unfriendly materials like plastic, and the hegemony of multinationals. It's a symbol of an intellectual center where balance is the ultimate goal – the balance between dark and light, negative and positive, feminine and masculine, good and evil, hot and cold.

Adapted from Thermocline of Art, New Asian Waves.

AGUS SUWAGE
YIN YANG







More and more of us in the industrialized world are feeling a spiritual void, and coming to believe that moving away from consumerism and towards community may be an important step in recovering that nameless thing we've lost.

Gary Snyder



Live Without Dead Time

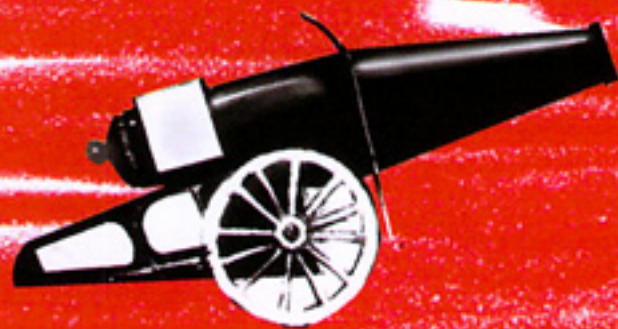
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THERE WAS A TIME WHEN SIMPLY DESCRIBING the fact that capitalism was in a state of crisis, driven by irreconcilable contradictions, was taken to suggest that it was heading for a cliff. By now, it seems abundantly clear that this is not the case. Capitalism is always in a crisis. The crisis never goes away. Financial markets are always producing bubbles of one sort or another; those bubbles always burst, sometimes catastrophically; often entire national economies collapse, sometimes the global markets system itself begins to come apart. But every time the structure is reassembled. Slowly, painfully, dutifully, the pieces always end up being put back together once again.

The strategic question then is, how can we shatter this sense of inevitability.

Emergency Exit Collective

From The 2008 G8 on Hokkaido, a Strategic Assessment



this is how it all begins

WE STOP BUYING OUR MUSIC FROM CORPORATE-OWNED STORES, our food from supermarkets and our clothing from malls. We become bottom-feeders, always foraging at the lowest levels of consumption. In every purchase we make, we obsessively search for the wisest, most enlightened deals. And when we find them, we share that knowledge with our friends. We punish the big, the super and the mega. We reward the small, the slow, the local, the personal.

Size is our enemy.

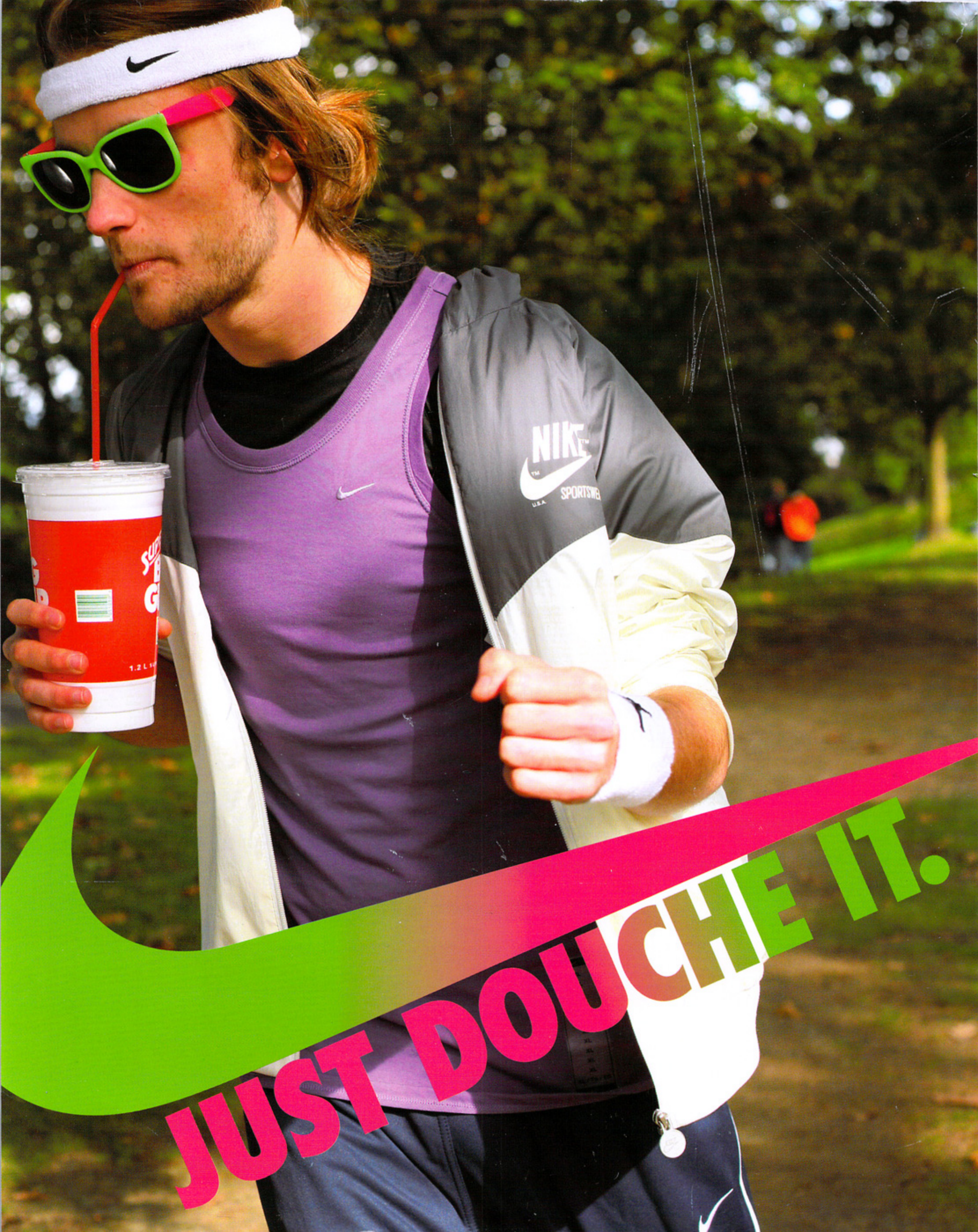
And once we have shrunk our world, narrowed our focus and imposed some much needed discipline of self, we start networking with other activists to launch coordinated global attacks. A million people a day drinking indie coffee instead of Starbucks. Another million boycotting Exxon Mobil. And thousands more every day choosing indie sneakers over Nike.

In this way we become true cultural creatives ... playful resistors ... catalysts for change. We become dispensers of bottom-up cool. A growing mass of people driving the evolution of capitalism, transforming it into a healthier, more just, more grassroots affair.

In this Year of the Ox, let's turn megacorporate capitalism on its head.

for the wild, Kalle

Next Issue: Blueprint For A New Left. Send your most inspiring work to editor@adbusters.org and artdirector@adbusters.org.



JUST DOUCHE IT.